Middle Leaders Supporting Teachers to Engage Māori Learners

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ABSTRACT

The role of middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools is fundamental in leading the teaching and learning for all learners. The Ministry of Education has targeted or labelled Māori as priority learners. Middle leaders and teachers are the voices of these learners. There are significant factors as to why Māori learners are not achieving alongside others. Some of these factors correlate with socio economics, poverty, barriers to learning, and a school environment not being conducive to Te Ao Māori tikanga. However, it does remain clear in all schools that middle leaders have the accountability to question the engagement and progression of teachers and learners in the classroom. The responsibility encapsulates the enormity of the demanding role of middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools have today. Middle leaders must demonstrate the skills to support and establish culturally responsive environments where teachers are promoting engagement and achievement for Māori learners in the classroom.

This qualitative study explored the role middle leaders have in supporting teachers to engage Māori learners. The study explored the perceptions from middle leaders and teachers in two state primary schools in Auckland, New Zealand. A semi-structured interview with each middle leader and an online survey with teachers provided my research with data about current enablers and barriers associated with cultural responsiveness in two primary schools. In shaping the research I adopted the Kāupapa Māori approach which substantiated my understanding of the knowledge of others' through their experiences. My research required further understanding of the experiences of, and actions taken by, current middle leaders in interpreting their role, and the numerous skills they demonstrate in order to be effective in supporting teachers engaging Māori learners.

Some major findings included that both middle leaders considered their role had ambiguity. Their understanding was shared, as both middle leaders expressed similarities about how they were leading the teaching and learning in their school. The teachers outlined the mahi (work) that middle leaders demonstrate and the relationships they have established with teachers, students and whānau. The findings of this study also showed common barriers that exist for middle leaders and teachers to engage Māori learners in the classroom. The recommendations encourage educators to reflect on these findings as they have the potential to provide clarity and understanding of the role middle leaders have to influence, transform and improve Māori engagement in New Zealand primary schools. All learners, especially those identified as Māori in New Zealand schools, must maintain their culture, identity and language in order to be empowered and successful.

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning" (AUT, 2018).

Signature:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Tenā koutou katoa,   *Greetings to all,*

Ko Raymundo toku matua   *My father is Raymundo*

Ko Kathy toku whaea   *My mother is Kathy*

Ko taku tama a Delakruez   *My son is Delakruez*

Ko Ngati Filipino te matua   *My father is from the Philippines*

Ko Ngai Tahu te whaea   *My mother is from Ngāi Tahu*

engari i Whangarei ahau i tipu ai   *But I grew up in Whangarei*

Ko Connie taku ingoa   *My name is Connie.*

Nō reira, tena koutou katoa   *Therefore, greetings to all.*

Ka mataia ake te whakaar o e noho wahangu ana nga tamariki mena waiho ai a ratou ahurea ki waho.

My research will investigate an assumption that children are silently asked to leave their culture at the door in education.

A passion I have in education is to see Māori students being engaged and successful. More importantly, I want to see Māori learners empowered by teachers and leaders in mainstream primary schools. In order for Māori learners to succeed they need to be in culturally responsive classrooms. The middle leaders and teachers in primary schools throughout New Zealand are the voices and pillars of learning for priority learners – those identified as Māori. A number of educators have guided Māori learners to be successful in education, however, this is not the case for all schools – it is evident that culturally responsive leadership is not employed consistently throughout our bicultural nation. Therefore, middle leaders are pivotal in students' development and education. The Ministry of Education (2012) defined middle leaders as educators holding pivotal roles in leading the teaching and learning in schools. Middle leaders demonstrate expertise and substantial capabilities around supporting teachers to engage Māori learners.

It is an assumption of this research that teachers and middle leaders not demonstrating culturally responsive practice may be a result of low engagement and success of Māori learners. In particular, teachers are likely to face inadequate and unsupportive middle leaders who lack the knowledge and capacity to support teachers engaging Māori learners. The dissertation may add to an understanding of how informed middle leaders are around the specific skills needed to demonstrate effective leadership around the topic of engaging Māori learners. Middle leaders working collaboratively with teachers are effective, which impacts on Māori learners being more engaged in the classroom. As Robson and Bassett (2017) note, "When teams have a shared goal that each member is motivated to achieve, it can create a high level of harmony or synergy, that can lead to highly efficient decision making, problem

solving and learning" (p.3). Therefore, schools that have knowledgeable and supportive middle leaders, who support teachers to engage Māori learners, are likely to demonstrate more success in learning. Through data collection my dissertation will investigate how middle leaders are effectively supporting teachers to engage Māori learners.

Furthermore, I discuss the aim and questions that drive the small-scale research, my rationale and purpose in describing how middle leaders support teachers to engage Māori learners, a description of the context of middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools, an explanation of my experiences and why I have chosen this topic, and an overview of each chapter throughout this dissertation. In 2016, Māori constituted approximately 16% of the residential population. It is my assumption that Māori students' engagement and success could be enhanced with culturally responsive pedagogy in primary schools. My second assumption in this research is that engagement of Māori learners could be enhanced when teachers are well supported by middle leaders.

Rationale and purpose of this study

The middle leaders in New Zealand schools have a rewarding but, at times, challenging role. This research will examine middle leaders and teachers in two Auckland primary schools (School one and School two). The declining achievement from Māori learners encourages me, as a Māori researcher in education, to look closely at what surrounding support teachers of Māori learners are receiving in primary schools. Teachers who work in environments where they are supported enable culturally responsive practices that encourage Māori learners to be more engaged and successful. The questions and professional reflection provide an insight into current practices that impact on Māori learners being disengaged in the classroom.

Aim and questions

The overall aim was to share an understanding of the skills middle leaders have within their role that builds trusting relationships to support teachers to be culturally responsive in engaging Māori learners. The questions were designed to clarify the skills, roles and support, between middle leaders and teachers engaging Māori learners.
The key questions leading this research study were:

1. What are the key skills and roles middle leaders need to support teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?
2. How well have middle leaders established those skills and roles with teachers?
3. What barriers exist for middle leaders in demonstrating support for teachers engaging Māori learners in their classroom?
4. How could middle leaders improve support for teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?

In the research interviews that I have carried out, the responses to the first research question defined and explored the specific roles of middle leaders to support the learning and engagement of Māori learners. Middle leaders were able to provide explicit examples of their contribution of effective leadership as well as reflect on supportive relationships with teachers they worked alongside. This question tested my assumption about the middle leader's capabilities and allowed for critical reflection, and this provided more depth and clarity about efficient practice.

The second research question allowed experienced middle leaders to describe and explain how they demonstrated effective leadership with teachers. Middle leaders were explicit about their role and the contribution they demonstrated that supported teachers' practice. In addition, factors like the school culture and priorities were discussed and the discussion allowed middle leaders to show they had an awareness of others, culturally and professionally.

The third question discussed barriers that were evident in primary schools for middle leaders to be supportive of teachers and more effective to engage Māori learners. Teachers are pivotal in promoting learning and success in the classroom. However, there were numerous barriers that elaborated on the challenges middle leaders faced within their role and professional practice.

The fourth and final research question suggested a range of strategies, policies and initiatives that teachers could employ in order to improve Māori student engagement in their classrooms. In New Zealand, Māori learners are identified as priority learners; Māori achievement and success is reportedly lower than other ethnic groups within New Zealand education (Education Review Office (ERO), 2010; ERO, 2015).

Context

The Ministry of Education (2012) have described New Zealand primary schools as "an education setting that provides all learners with the opportunity to grow, engage and share success in all learning" (p.2). The research required middle leaders and teacher's participation in two New Zealand primary schools to provide examples and an understanding into their experiences. The two New Zealand schools of a low decile and high decile range in the Auckland region contributed to the depth of experience, knowledge and understanding of culturally responsive practices in middle leadership and classrooms. My positioning as a Māori researcher encompassed an indigenous approach that employed Kāupapa Māori values throughout the small-scale research.

Significance of this research in education

As a New Zealand educator I value being able to see Māori students succeed. In order for Māori to succeed in mainstream education they need to be a part of culturally responsive environments where success is respected and valued. Middle leaders and teachers are heavily responsible for the implementation of teaching and learning where school environments allow Māori learners to access, learn, communicate, thrive and contribute towards success in education. Unfortunately, the current results reflect that not all Māori students are succeeding and not all environments are culturally responsive. According to reports through the Ministry of Education (2013), "nearly one in five Māori children will not have achieved the basic literacy and numeracy standards by the time they leave primary school, and more Māori students are likely to disengage from education at year seven" (para.4). This trend may be a reflection of the needs of Māori students, or the role of middle leaders and/or teachers in enhancing engagement of Māori students. Regardless of the reason, the Ministry of Education (2012) reported learning outcomes for Māori learners need to be addressed. This study focuses just on the one element of the role of middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools.

My tikanga (values) as Māori views and perspectives were pertinent throughout the research associated with Māori achievement, engagement and success. My direct experiences as an experienced educator provided cultural and professional background for my understanding throughout the research. I have been in schools where support for teachers was interpreted and demonstrated in questionable forms; however, there were also exemplary leadership approaches from middle leaders that supported teachers to engage Māori learners. I firmly believe middle leaders need to support educators being able to walk alongside the path of others neither in front nor behind.

Research design

The Kāupapa Māori Research framework provided an opportunity for an indigenous approach into creating knowledge and understanding. The Kāupapa Māori framework employed culturally ethical approaches to guide Māori researchers in understanding the views and opinions of participants. Henry and Pene (2011) attempted to define Kāupapa Māori as the Māori way of doing, thinking, being which encapsulates a Māori worldview. Furthermore, Pihama (2010) supported the Kāupapa Māori framework as an approach that ensured cultural integrity was maintained when analysing Māori issues.

The qualitative research used a thematic analysis. Middle leaders participated in semi-structured interviews and the teachers completed an online survey. The semi-structured interviews informed the survey questions for teachers. Kāupapa Māori tikanga was evident throughout the data collection process. Boyatzis (1998) defined thematic analysis as, "a common approach in analysing qualitative data by categorising data into common themes" (p.4). The first stage of the data analysis process was transcribing the interviews and

identifying for coding patterns and themes with the information collated and organised. Identifying the themes contributed towards the research being relevant, authentic and accessible. It was valuable to have an insight into how middle leaders portray their roles within their positions, and the impact this has on teachers and student outcomes.

The impact and considerations relating to informed consent, confidentiality and the acknowledgement of potential consequences for the participants are ethical concerns when conducting research through semi-structured interviews and surveys (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). This research assured confidentiality, anonymity and cultural awareness as ethical considerations throughout the research design and this was imperative for all of the participants.

Overview of the following chapters

The following provides a brief overview of each chapter.
In Chapter 2, I utilise relevant literature to critique and discuss middle leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy in mainstream education. I present research to unpack and describe middle leadership in New Zealand primary schools, and to outline the support middle leaders demonstrate for teachers engaging Māori learners. Māori student achievement is an important theme that I discuss through current policies and initiatives that are provided in documents to schools by the government. The documents provide educators with culturally responsive practices that acknowledge how to engage and support Māori learners in mainstream classrooms.

In Chapter 3, I present the approach that is utilised for the dissertation. I used an indigenous methodology of Kāupapa Māori Research framework. My cultural lens supported the knowledge and understanding of others. As Bishop (1998) describes, Kāupapa Māori provides Māori researchers with a framework for approaching research and creating knowledge from a Māori view: one that has been lived and experienced by and through Māori.

In Chapter 4, the findings of this dissertation is presented through an examination of the roles and skills required of middle leaders to support teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools. The perspectives from experienced middle leaders and experienced teachers currently in New Zealand primary schools present thematic findings. The analysis provides commonalities between the middle leaders' perspectives on how they describe the role and skills of middle leaders and the perspectives of the teachers'.

In Chapter 5, I critically review the findings that surface from this research against the literature associated with the topic. This dissertation will conclude with discussions surrounding the implications, limitations and further recommendations from this study for exploring middle leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy further.

Ehara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takatini. My success should not be bestowed onto me alone, as it was not individual success but success of a collective (Anonymous, 2018).

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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

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Introduction

The increasing concern about Māori students being disengaged and unsuccessful within education continues to circulate throughout our nation (Bishop & Berryman, 2006; ERO, 2015; Ministry of Education, 2013). This chapter critically reviews the literature on how middle leaders support teachers in creating engagement for Māori learners. The review consequently highlights the minimal scope of literature directed towards culturally responsive middle leadership and the results this pedagogy may have for Māori learners. Therefore, as there is restricted scope of research on primary schools, I have considered and drawn on literature from international settings and the secondary school sector.

As I reviewed the literature the following themes became evident:

- Theme one: The role and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools;
- Theme two: Professional learning and development for leaders and teachers; and
- Theme three: Culturally responsive pedagogy.

The following sections outline key literature for each theme, providing an insight into how middle leaders' skills and role demonstrate the support for teachers to deliver culturally responsive practices that engage Māori learners in the classroom.

The term middle leader can be described as a curriculum leader, head teacher, deputy principal, team leader and associate principal. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, it is noted I will be using the term middle leader throughout the dissertation.

Theme one: The role and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools

Introduction

Middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools are educators who support leaders, teachers and students. In addition, Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) described middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools as, "holding pivotal roles in leading the teaching and learning activities that determine the success of educational outcomes" (p. 20). The role and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools can be considered from a variety of perspectives (Ministry of Education, 2012). I begin by defining middle leadership before developing the review of literature on the theme of roles and responsibilities around the following sub-themes: curriculum and pedagogy leadership; professionalism; Educational Leadership Model; distributed leadership; care, communication and trusting relationships; barriers to the support of teachers by middle leaders; hierarchical relationships; administrative demands; and time.

Defining middle leadership

The generically used term or title 'middle leader' in New Zealand primary schools is defined more explicitly within each school. The Ministry of Education (2012) defines middle leaders as the people leading the teaching and learning in schools. Furthermore, "The unique needs and context of the school and school community establish how middle leadership roles are exclusively devised and implemented" (p.6). The responsibilities and skills middle leaders demonstrate emerge through a comprehensive body of literature (Bennett, Woods, Wise & Newton, 2007; Cardno, 2012; Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006; Harris & Jones, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2012). It is important that the middle leader's role is explicit because clarity will ensure the expectations are realistic and measureable. The middle leader's role encapsulates many responsibilities and there are clear guidelines to ensure they meet the expectations and requirements necessary for their position. The next subsection considers one of the most significant responsibilities, namely curriculum and pedagogy leadership.

Curriculum and pedagogy leadership

The curriculum and pedagogical leadership demonstrated by middle leaders impacts on classroom teaching and learning (Marshall, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2012). Middle leaders organise the direct influences on teachers' classroom practice which secure improved outcomes for learners (Bennett et al., 2007; Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006; Harris & Jones, 2017). The deliberate influence middle leaders have on teachers' classroom practice can be seen through professional discussions. In addition, the research of Gurr and Drysdale (2013) found that middle leaders are responsible for providing feedback, scaffolding new learning strategies, and modelling effective practice, all of which impact on and influence teachers' classroom practice. The grounding, experience and understanding to unpack teachers' practice and support others contributes significantly towards improvement and successful outcomes. Furthermore, Jones (2006) supports the need to build relationships in order to support teachers as being critical for all middle leaders within their role in schools. Middle leaders who have nurtured relationships, and at the same time lead professionally, have profound success in working with and alongside others.

Professionalism

Professionalism is expected and required by leadership within schools which also includes those holding middle leadership roles. Professionalism is seen as establishing a culture and professional relationships where leaders are approachable so that coaching and mentoring can develop (Bassett, 2016; Cardno, 2012; Heng & Marsh, 2009; Jones, 2006; Robson & Bassett, 2017). The New Zealand Education Council (2017) stated that educators' professionalism is paramount and this is evident through teacher appraisal criteria and ethical guidelines. Moreover, modelling professionalism is essential to ensure the relationships between middle leaders and teachers remain professional and not clouded by emotive

decisions. These decisions are heavily interwoven between middle leaders and teachers' actions which demonstrate effective leadership.

Educational Leadership Model (ELM)

Research by Jones (2006) found the role of leading from the middle was an ambiguous role. The ambiguity led to the development of *ELM* presented in Ministry of Education documents, which provided educational leaders with a framework that sets out specific qualities, skills and knowledge leaders require to lead schools into the 21st century (Ministry of Education, 2012). The model is holistic where, "leaders are leading the teaching and learning for teachers and students" (p12). In addition, as the Ministry of Education (2012) suggested, the *ELM* provides leaders with a framework to demonstrate how relationships are woven through pedagogy, culture, systems, partnerships and networks from a Māori worldview. The framework utilises tikanga through Pono, Ako, Manaakitanga, and Awhinatanga (see glossary). Middle leaders are required to implement the *ELM* that demonstrates the essential leadership skills needed in New Zealand schools (Basset, 2016; Fitchett, 2009; Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006). These expectations can be met through distributed leadership, and that approach is discussed in the next section.

Distributed leadership

Middle leaders who encourage collaboration and shared decision-making understand it is an important part of their role. It was suggested by Cardno (2006) that the assumptions around collaborative decision-making can be particularly effective when harnessed to implement initiatives for improving student outcomes. The challenges that stand between the school and leaders weigh heavily on individuals whereas sharing decision-making could improve student outcomes and teacher performance. The research of Bennett (2006) and Busher (2005) found that as middle leaders empower teachers they have a greater sense of ownership and are included in decision-making. Busher (2005) suggested that "Genuine collegiality seems to be based on mutual trust between the parties involved in the decision-making" (p.5). Harris (2004) offered that "Engaging many people in leadership activity is at the core of distributed leadership in action" (p.14). Distributed leadership can be a vehicle for working collaboratively as decisions are shared, considered and supported amongst the team. Cardno (2012) showed that middle leaders creating cultures of integration rather than differentiation or fragmentation are more likely to be effective. Furthermore, Harris and Jones (2017) implied that middle leaders found at the middle tier are a critical layer to support and develop others within their schools. Busher and Harris (1999) suggested, "The empowerment of others is through collaborative cultures that foster collegiality through shaping and establishing a shared vision" (p.83). Relationships between middle leaders and teachers demonstrate collaborative development and culture within schools. A necessary element for distributed leadership to be evident and successful can be seen through communicative pathways

established between middle leaders and teachers, and these are discussed further in the next sub-section.

Care, communication and trusting relationships

Research by Cardno (2012) and Fitzgerald and Gunter (2006) described middle leaders as 'playing a vital role' in establishing and nurturing an ethic of care. Middle leaders employ a range of skills which fall under the topic of nurturing an ethic of care, such as: communication through active listening and providing feedback (Cardno, 2012; Jones, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2012); and fostering relationships with leaders, teachers, students, whanau and the community, and developing a trusting culture (Cardno, 2012; Gurrr & Drysdale, 2013). Gurr and Drysdale (2013) suggest that middle leaders who build professional relationships demonstrate the impact effective leadership, conversations, and trust can have on student outcomes. Cardno (2012) argued that leading and understanding people is paramount for teaching and learning, because leaders have frequent interactions with teachers within primary schools. Gurr and Drysdale (2013) also found that understanding the relationship between power and trust mobilises middle leaders to support teachers effectively. Unfortunately, the perspective where care, trust and communication are not evident in the relationships between middle leaders and teachers can affect schools. Some of the barriers and challenges to the successful support of teachers are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Barriers to the support of teachers by middle leaders

There is literature on the challenges middle leaders are currently facing in primary schools. Busher, Hammersley-Fletcher and Turner (2007) shared that it is important that middle leaders have obtained clear understandings of the nature of change and the reasons why barriers may occur throughout their role. The particular barriers that have surfaced throughout the literature describe the pressure that comes from both top and bottom levels within organisations, which impacts on the middle leaders' role. Moreover, the expectations for middle leaders present tensions between the skills and roles they have, and what is also expected school-wide. Barriers include having the authority to ensure learning is inclusive. Middle leaders support teachers in approaching classroom learning where everyone can participate, and establishing a caring and respectful tone in the classroom. These are explicit ways to refine cultural sensitivity and awareness and are evident through the policies and initiatives that are derived from the government to improve culturally responsive leadership (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2013; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015; Webber, McKinley & Rubie-Davies, 2016). These challenges suggest there are significant barriers as middle leaders are trying to support teachers to be more effective in engaging Māori learners. Santamaria and Santamaria (2015) and Webber et al. (2016) said it is important to recognise the barriers to improving teachers' culturally responsive practice through developing relationships and cultural approaches to learning.

Hierarchical relationships

Fitzgerald (2009) and Harris and Jones (2017) argued that the hierarchical framework in schools compromises loyalty and trust as schools are structured around teams, or syndicates, departments, curriculum teams, or senior leadership teams. Therefore, in order to balance the hierarchical tensions within schools, it is necessary for middle leaders to establish collaborative relationships with others which work towards successful outcomes for learners. Jones (2006) and Marshall (2012) contended that middle leaders' influence and acts of leadership motivate and inspire teachers to work collaboratively and foster interpersonal relationships in order to improve student outcomes. Heng and Marsh (2009) stated that, "middle leaders need to have an awareness and understanding of others, as they are responsible for working alongside people, and quite often those teachers who are reluctant to change" (p.528). Harris and Jones (2017) said collaborative hierarchical relationships, "also shows that the middle leadership role in schools is particularly challenging as it attracts pressure from both the top and bottom in organisations" (p.214).

Administrative demands and minimal time

Bassett (2016), Cardno (2012), Dinham (2007) and Fitzgerald (2009) all considered administrative demands and minimal time as barriers for middle leaders. Busher (2005) has suggested these are particular challenges for middle leaders trying to support teachers. The middle leaders numerous tasks, responsibilities and relationships confirm that leaders in these positions must have clarity in their job description. The barriers of time restrictions and high expectations to implement extracurricular responsibilities and pastoral care duties reflect the added pressure that exists for middle leaders. Bassett's (2016) research reiterated that, "The expectations placed on middle leaders are varied, complex and demanding" (p.103). The systems and organisations that are implemented daily require clarity and sustainability in order for middle leaders to have room to support teaching and learning in schools. Limited time is a barrier middle leaders contend with daily which impacts on performance or on leading to the best of their ability (Bassett, 2016; Bennett et al., 2007; Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman, 2015). Bassett (2006) found that middle leaders already have an ambiguous role, and that "the middle leader's role have created uncertainty and a number of challenges" (p.99). These challenges emerge in primary schools where the responsibilities middle leaders are given become more ambiguous and complex daily.

Theme summary

The enablers associated with support for teachers overlap with the features noted in the roles and skills required of middle leaders. They are: establishing and modelling professionalism; establishing and nurturing an ethic of care through communication skills, providing feedback and developing trusting relationships; shared decision-making, creating cultures of integration between middle leaders and teachers and fostering collaborative environments; and the

curriculum and pedagogical leadership demonstrated by middle leaders. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2006) supported middle leaders building an environment like that described by these enablers that value teachers and their work. A collaborative environment can provide a foundation where teachers may feel less resistant to change and more confident about implementing new decisions, policies and strategies. Cardno (2012) stated, "Leaders who have built trusting relationships with colleagues are likely to be more productive in bringing about desired change" (p.31). As mentioned previously, there are obvious barriers that hinder the middle leader's role, such as the hierarchal pressures in schools, administrative demands placed on and expected of middle leaders, as well as the restricted time middle leaders have to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Theme two: Professional Learning Development (PLD)

Introduction

The Ministry of Education (2016) stated, "PLD presents as a vehicle for improving the teaching and learning between teachers and students" (p.5). There is substantial literature surrounding the way PLD is currently implemented across schools (Cardno, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2016; Petrie & McGee, 2012). Furthermore, the clarity of who PLD is targeting is imperative as middle leaders direct how and where this will fit within their school. Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako networks and PLD opportunities are supported by the Ministry of Education to "create collaboration within and across schools" to improve the teaching and learning practices that in turn lead to improved achievement (Ministry of Education, 2016, p.4). The position middle leaders have within PLD demonstrates another layer in their role and responsibilities in supporting teachers to engage learners within the classroom. There are three important aspects of PLD which must be considered in relation to the work of middle leaders, and these form the following three sub-sections: PLD for Middle Leaders; Middle Leaders providing in-school PLD; and the Ministry of Education PLD.

PLD for middle leaders.

The research from Bassett (2016) and Grootenboer et al. (2015) presented the middle leader's role as challenging, and that is encouraged to have sufficient training and PLD for teachers stepping into this role. It is also clear through Poskitt's (2005) research that the qualification of a classroom teacher is not adequate to fulfil the role of a middle leader in primary schools. Gurr and Drysdale's (2012) research reported over a number of studies that "there was a paucity in training and development for middle leaders" (p.66). The focus of PLD for middle leaders is aimed at what learning will be done and how this will be implemented to eventually improve the outcomes for all students (Cardno, 2015; Petrie & McGee, 2012). Gurr and Drysdale (2012) discussed the number of middle leaders failing to see the need or requirements for prior development and learning in such an ambiguous role. Middle leaders, those delivering and

implementing the PLD school-wide, are required to obtain some level of professional expertise in order to have positive outcomes for learners.

Middle leaders providing in-school PLD

Middle leaders work collaboratively to support teaching and learning in schools. Cardno (2005) noted that middle leaders who have a clear understanding of school-wide and staff development needs are going to positively influence practice through middle leaders' ongoing development and learning. ERO (2010) have acknowledged, "Key approaches across New Zealand schools do emphasise the way middle leaders and teachers can improve their practice in order to support Māori students" (p.12). Research from Vescio, Ross and Adams (2008) noted "the particular challenges middle leaders and teachers face in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills" (p.86). The challenges middle leaders face in adapting PLD in New Zealand are associated with helping teachers to feel encouraged to adapt their current practices to engage Māori learners. The middle leaders and teachers' reflection on practice, engagement and negotiating the implementation of collaborative PLD within schools presented valid and measureable outcomes for Māori learners (Vescio et al., 2008).

By considering middle leaders supporting teachers specifically, Cardno (2005) suggested that leaders are to adequately plan school-wide PLD to cater for and target specific needs of teachers, as leaders impact the engagement and practice of teachers. Further, Kennedy (2016) and Vescio et al. (2008) stated that PLD required middle leaders to be explicit about both who the learning in PLD is targeted towards (the teacher as the learner), and the focus in terms of improving specific student outcomes. The Ministry of Education (2012) has produced documents to support middle leaders having clarity with case studies that support the implementation of effective professional development and leading with expertise. Furthermore, Kennedy (2016) stated, "We need to ensure that PLD promotes real learning rather than merely adding more noise to working environments" (p.30).

Overall, middle leaders are required to implement comprehensive PLD and to demonstrate a sound understanding of the curriculum content and pedagogy. This PLD on the relationship between knowledge and practice seeks to enhance the engagement of Māori learners. This is discussed further in the next sub-section through the Ministry of Education's approaches.

Ministry of Education PLD

The Ministry of Education (2016) provides schools in New Zealand with PLD opportunities and initiatives. The Teaching and School Practices Survey (TSP) tool has been established and administered across schools in New Zealand to collate information in order to review planning and professional development needs (Wylie, McDowall, Ferral, Felgate, & Visser, 2017). The government strategies that build communities of learners through professional development pathways emphasise collaboration between middle leaders and teachers. The focus is also

directed towards improving the learning outcomes for Maori students, which requires cohesion through professional learning.

The Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako is an integral development provided by the Ministry of Education (2016) that "supports middle leaders to foster and work collaboratively with others" (p.6). ERO has reviewed how the Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako operates and functions within and across schools. It provided the Ministry of Education with a summary report outlining areas for development across schools and communities. The Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako widens the focus on learning and improvement to target not only the students in their own school but students in all other schools (ERO, 2016). Collaborative inquiries among middle leaders across and within schools are designed to lead to improved professional practice that also contributes to the enhancement of student outcomes through pathways identified as collaborative groups and the Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako (ERO, 2016; Vescio et al., 2008).

The collaborative inquiries and sharing of effective practices among middle leaders are seen as the drivers for the progression of Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako (Wylie et al., 2017). ERO (2016) supported the intent of Kāhui Ako when stating, "The Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako initiative [which] provides an important opportunity to build knowledge and expertise, stimulate improvement and innovations, and improve teaching and learning through collaboration" (p.5). The ERO (2016) report described collaborative professional development in the following way, "One way of addressing this variability is to focus the system on collaborative expertise and student progression. In collaborative cultures, all members of the community share responsibility for the success of the students". (p.5).

Literature has suggested that Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako networks are providing teachers and middle leaders with strategies that acknowledge, build and foster their relationships with Māori learners (ERO, 2010; ERO, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2012). In addition, as stated through the ERO (2017) Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako initiative, schools have integrated strands from collaborative learning in order to "support the structure and approaches from surrounding schools to improve the teaching and learning for students" (p.16). The Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako is also seen to be more sustainable and specifically aimed towards supporting the direct needs of neighbouring schools. The middle leader is key in leading this type of PLD actively to improve the outcomes of Māori learners.

Theme summary

New Zealand schools are provided with PLD through various documents and Ministry of Education-funded strategies such as Community of Learning: Kāhi Ako. There is understanding through a range of research that middle leaders need to focus on an area of improvement in order for teachers to have improved outcomes in Māori student achievement. The collaborative approaches which schools administer through PLD prove to be effective in developing

professional practice and learning. Therefore, PLD for middle leaders themselves is important to give them understanding, clarity and knowledge of the process of how and what is being implemented across their school. There are an extensive number of resources and guidelines to be used in PLD that are available for middle leaders and schools to support the strategies and approaches towards improving Māori student outcomes.

Theme three: culturally responsive pedagogy

Introduction

The New Zealand school system is required to provide Māori students with a scaffold in which they thrive, engage and contribute towards learning (Ministry of Education, 2012). Three pathways establish culturally responsive environments in particular for Māori learners: rich programmes that ensure success; connections with one another through fostering relationships; and positive engagement being evident where learners move towards success (Bevan-Brown, 2005; Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). A school should not be a place where people are asked to leave their culture at the door and contribute in 'empty' classrooms, which, leaves Māori learners powerless and disengaged (ERO, 2010). There are substantial aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy which consider the impact on improving the engagement and outcomes for Maori learners in classrooms. These form the two sub-sections within this theme: cultural responsiveness; and Māori student achievement in New Zealand primary schools.

Cultural responsiveness

The term cultural responsiveness can be defined and interpreted in many ways. Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh and Teddy (2009) suggested:

> Cultural responsiveness will be accomplished when educators create learning contexts within their classroom; where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence; where culture counts; where learning is interactive, dialogic and spirals; where participants are connected to one another through the establishment of a common vision for what constitutes excellence in educational outcomes (p.1).

How cultural responsiveness in schools is influenced and effective will be evident through the practice, power and, equity demonstrated by leaders, teachers and students. As Glynn (2015) argued, educators need to develop and employ culturally responsive pedagogy in order to improve the academic success of Māori students. Webber et al. (2016) described culturally responsive pedagogy as practices that demonstrate authentic relationships and engagement with Māori learners.

Culturally responsive leadership is a term that has substance at all levels of educational settings. The term has been derived from the concept of culturally responsive teaching, which

involves those practices, pedagogies and policies that create inclusive environments and learning for students from ethnically diverse backgrounds (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015). In support of culturally responsive teaching, Glynn (2015) argued that you do not have to be Māori to instil culturally responsive pedagogy in education. Educators demonstrate cultural responsiveness by having an understanding and knowledge around how to bring the culture of the students into a classroom where learning works towards improving the outcomes and engagement. On the other hand Ford (2012) addressed the declining achievement for Māori in mainstream education as "a shift in power balancing, which could be addressed by working in partnership with the community and whānau to support experiences where Māori are enjoying and succeeding in education" (p.35). Therefore, as middle leaders are working collaboratively alongside the community and teachers to engage Maori learners in the classroom, outcomes will evolve in schools, and this is explored further in the next sub-section.

Māori student achievement in New Zealand primary schools

Bishop (2010) and Santamaria and Santamaria (2015) argued that teachers who enhance students' cultural identity through building relationships are more likely to improve Māori student achievement. However, an ERO (2010) report stated, "Not all educators have yet recognised their professional responsibility to provide a learning environment that promotes success for Māori students" (p.1). Further, the report continued to suggest a range of initiatives that are available for teachers and schools; these initiatives, they suggested, will challenge how achievement is measured for Māori learners. *The Kā Hikitia; Best Evidence Synthesis* pedagogy, and the *Tātaiako Cultural Competencies* (a document that recognises the cultural competencies which teachers and leaders are required to demonstrate in schools) are particular guidelines for promoting success (Ministry of Education, 2013). These strategies should provide mainstream educators with approaches that minimise the declining achievement and success for Māori. Bishop and Glynn (1999) and Ford (2012) offer strategies for engaging Māori learners through understanding how to build relationships; making connections with the students and their whānau; and providing relevant learning opportunities for Māori to improve student achievement.

The education documents provided by the Ministry of Education highlight levels of cultural competencies, successful learning and programmes, and the improved outcomes for Māori in schools nationwide. The list of documents aiming to improve the outcomes of Māori learners in education is as follows:

- *Kā Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2012-2017* (Ministry of Education, 2013)
- *Te Kotahitanga Project (TKP)*
- *Tātaiako – Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners* (Ministry of Education, 2011)
- *Quality Teaching for Diverse Students in Schooling: Best Evidence Synthesis* (Robinson et al., 2009)

It is common to see and hear the deficit labels and assumptions made generically about Māori learners in mainstream schools. For example, they are lower achievers, not engaged in classroom programmes and lacking confidence in education (Bishop et al., 2009; Ministry of Education, 2010). Researchers investigated the substance surrounding such assumptions through the research in the TKP professional development which highlighted deficit generalisations. In order to counter the generalisations Santamaria, Webber, Santamaria, Dam and Jayavant (2016) discussed *Te Ara Hou – The Māori Achievement Collaborative (MAC)* supporting educational leadership development which challenges the status quo strategies that have resulted in inequitable educational outcomes for Māori. *MACs* have been committed to the goal of fostering personal and professional growth aimed at Māori success. In addition, the investigation and findings through the *Best Evidence Synthesis* (Robinson et al., 2009) supported the development of the Ministry of Education (2013) *Kā Hikitia – Accelerating Success 2013-2017*, which improves the outcomes for all and, in particular, Māori learners in schools.

Bishop et al. (2009) stated, "Raising Māori student achievement can be seen inextricably interconnected with the creation of culturally appropriate and responsive learning contexts" (p.iv). Berryman and Bishop (2015) stated the Effective Teaching Profile (EFT) became necessary to provide schools with a framework where "Māori learners are able to bring who they are and who they identify with to their learning" (p.287). Bishop (2010) reported on the use of the EFT being developed for teachers to embed culturally responsive pedagogy through their environment and learning. The classroom should be built around positive relationships and non-deficit thinking by teachers. The research presented through an EFT lens provided middle leaders, teachers, students and whanau with the narratives to record their experiences around learning in mainstream educational settings. MacFarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh and Bateman (2007) derived the Educultural wheel through the TKP, with five concepts that are interwoven as: "Whānaungatanga (Building relationships); Kotahitanga (Ethic of bonding); Manaakitanga (Ethic of care); Rangitiratanga (Teacher effectiveness); and Pumanawatanga (General classroom moral, pulse, tone)" (p.67). Culturally responsive environments through an Educultural Wheel provide leaders with a framework that aims to develop teacher competency and support the outcomes for Māori learners. The culturally safe framework provides school leaders with integral principles that value Māori tikanga to improve student outcomes and influence others (MacFalane et al., 2007).

Tātaiako – The Cultural Competencies for Teachers of Māori Learners (Ministry of Education, 2011) is a document which aligns to the graduate profile for teachers designed by the Education Teachers Council in New Zealand schools. The document lists five competencies with an aim of Māori learners achieving success as Māori. It is presented through a framework which also links the behaviours, values and attitudes of teachers in educational settings. The Ministry of Education (2011) have identified the five competencies as:

- Whānaungatanga (actively engaging in respectful working relationships with Māori learners, parents and whānau, hapū, iwi and the Māori community)

- Ako (taking responsibility for their own learning and that of the Māori learners);
- Wānanga (participating with learners and communities in robust dialogue for the benefit of Māori learners' achievement);
- Maanakitanga (showing integrity, sincerity and respect towards Māori beliefs, language and culture); and
- Tangata Whenuatanga (affirming Māori learners as Māori) (Ministry of Education, 2011, p.4).

This provides contexts for learning where the language, identity and culture of Māori learners and their whānau is affirmed.

Theme summary

The research presented highlights deficit stereo-types for Māori learners – those identified as priority learners in New Zealand education. The TKP revealed understandings of the disparities Māori learners face in secondary education through their experiences in having teachers and middle leaders who have not built authentic relationships and presented learning through culturally responsive strategies and perspectives. The Ministry of Education has collaborated and devised documents to expand the improvement and success of Māori learners. Research into the implementation of frameworks to support cultural responsiveness is showing support for the impact this has on middle leaders, teachers and learners. Māori student achievement continues to reflect the declining achievement and engagement across New Zealand primary schools. Despite the concern, this research has explored literature which has presented an extensive range of resources and programmes that are being accessed in schools, so teachers and leaders can support learners.

Conclusion

The focus on raising success and engagement for Māori learners in primary schools continues to circulate throughout our nation. This literature review acknowledges the skills and roles required by middle leaders to support teachers of Māori learners to enable positive outcomes. However, from this literature review, further research is required to explore the link between middle leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy for educators in primary schools. The hierarchical framework, the administrative demands and time, extracurricular responsibilities, and cultural sensitivity and awareness are barriers which continue to impede the middle leaders' role in supporting teachers. The literature reveals the important role of middle leaders in implementing effective PLD and demonstrating culturally responsive pedagogy. The review also identifies the impact supportive middle leaders have on improving professional practice and learning in primary education.

The next chapter presents the research methodology associated with this small-scale study into how middle leaders can enhance support for teachers of Māori learners, along with the process for data analysis and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine the skills current middle leaders have to support and guide teachers of Māori students. The comprehensive goal was to present an understanding of the skills middle leaders have within their roles to build trusting relationships to support teachers to be culturally responsive in engaging Māori learners.

The following research questions are embedded throughout this dissertation:

1. What are the key skills and roles middle leaders need to support teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?
2. How well have middle leaders established those skills and roles with teachers?
3. What barriers exist for middle leaders in demonstrating support for teachers engaging Māori learners in their classroom?
4. How could middle leaders improve support for teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?

This chapter outlines the methodology, research design and methods implemented throughout this research to achieve this aim. The approach I employed was an indigenous methodology of Kāupapa Māori. This small-scale research study utilised qualitative research approaches.

Methodology

An epistemology is a unique way of understanding and knowing what knowledge is. Epistemology, as noted by Bryman (2012), is the philosophic stance taken to describe what constitutes knowledge. Research approached through an epistemological positioning via Kāupapa Māori as a way of understanding and knowing what knowledge is seen through the Māori way (tikanga) (Smith, 1999), which requires an indigenous lens to look at the world. Moreover, the epistemological assumptions were supported through oral histories of Māori understanding.

Rationale

The topic of engaging Māori learners is an important issue in education. The Ministry of Education (2012) refer to Māori learners being disengaged and unsuccessful in classrooms in documents through the documents of, *KāHikitia Accelerating Success 2013-2017* and the *Tātaiako: Cultural competencies for teachers of Maori learners* (Ministry of Education, 2011). The Ministry of Education (2013) states that it "will monitor Māori students' progress and adapt activity so it is aligned with what we can see is working" (p.11). Further research examined how relationships support teachers so that Māori learners are more successful in the classroom (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Durie, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2013). Therefore, in

my research, Kāupapa Māori methodology was chosen as an approach to explore the understanding of assumptions regarding supporting teachers to engage Māori learners in primary schools.

Kāupapa Māori Research

Kāupapa Māori demonstrates an indigenous approach towards research. The following sections unpack how the Kāupapa Māori framework was employed through the Kāupapa Māori principles and values, and my background.

Kāupapa Māori framework

The Kāupapa Māori framework employs culturally ethical approaches that guide Māori researchers to understand the views and opinions of participants. Henry and Pene (2001) attempted to define "Kāupapa Māori as the Māori way of doing, thinking and being which encapsulates a Māori worldview" (p.234). The general approach of the research is, by Māori, for Māori and with Māori (Henry and Pene, 2001). Moreover, the dimensions stated throughout Kāupapa Māori Research will potentially benefit all participants and identified groups. Smith (1999) supports Kāupapa Māori Research as "The philosophy and practices of being and acting Māori" (p.1). Furthermore, Bishop (1998) and Smith (1999) describe Kāupapa Māori methodology as a framework to underpin culturally respectful relationships between researchers and participants. More importantly, the traditional cultural context within Kāupapa Māori should ensure language, culture and identity are not becoming colonised. The tikanga (values) and attitudes considered in Kāupapa Māori methodology enable culturally safe research (Bishop, 1998; Smith, 1999). The values employed by researchers such as Bishop (1998) and Durie (2004) further explain whanaungatanga as kinship, relationships or connectivity in discussions, and manaakitanga as a collaborative discussion between the researcher and participant. Likewise, Smith (1999) supports building and maintaining relationships which consider reciprocity, accountability and mutual respect. Furthermore, as Pihama (2010) notes, "the Kāupapa Māori framework is an approach to ensure that cultural integrity is maintained whilst analysing Māori issues" (p.10). Additionally, through this methodology, it is important with this topic to describe myself, my values, ideological biases, and relationship.

Kāupapa Māori principles

The Kāupapa Māori paradigm is a conceptualised term which has frequently been reviewed and revised (Bishop, 1998; Pihama, 2010; Smith, 1999). The intervention elements that Graham Hingangaroa Smith (2004) argues are integral principles through Kāupapa Māori are:
- Tino Rangatiratanga – (the 'self-determination' principle);
- Taonga tuku iho – (the 'cultural aspirations' principle);
- Ako Māori – (the 'culturally preferred' principle);

- Kia pike ake i nga raruraru o te kainga (the 'socio-economic mediation' principle);
- Whanau (the extended family structure principle); and
- Kāupapa (the 'collective philosophy' principle) (Smith 2004, p.47).

These principles have guided the structure of my research and are fundamental throughout the research process.

Pihama (2010) stated, "Kāupapa Māori aligns with critical theory as paradigms that seek to expose power relations which have perpetuated the continued oppression of Māori people" (p.12). However, the foundation and essence of protocols and practices throughout research continues to uphold tikanga and remain sacred for Māori, as Kāupapa Māori is in many ways viewed through an empowering position for Māori to engage in research (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1999). As Smith (1999) suggests:

> When Kāupapa Māori became coined – if you want to use that term in the context of research – it didn't just come out of a nowhere space. It came out of a particular struggle over the legitimacy of our identity; and the legitimacy that we as Māori want to do things. (Smith 2011, p.10)

Kāupapa Māori values

The following Kāupapa Māori values were embedded throughout my research design as:

- Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people);
- He kanohi kitea (face to face, present yourself to people face to face);
- Titiro, whakarongo … korero (look, listen … speak);
- Manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people, be generous);
- Kia tūpato (be cautious);
- Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of the people); and
- Kia māhaki (don't flaunt your knowledge) (Smith 1999, p.204).

The worldviews also support Māori perspectives. The cultural lens and past experiences guided my understanding through tikanga (values) and attitudes. The inclusion of partnership with participants to build the research with and for the community highlights acknowledgements through the Treaty of Waitangi document. Smith (1999) considers Kāupapa Māori methodology as the localised viewpoints that draw on key assumptions that provide a Māori worldview. Movements to bring about positive change for Māori communities have earlier been called Māoritanga and taha Māori; these terms both proclaim Māori pride in language, culture, traditions, and history (Smith, 1999). Therefore, the conceptual framework of Kāupapa Māori provided me with an authentic umbrella in order for tikanga (values) to embed the nurturing relationship with participants, which also affirmed being on a journey. Kāupapa Māori research "demonstrates the importance of being on a journey in the position of tangata whenua, the people of this land" (Moewaka-Barnes, 2015, as cited in Te Kotahi

Research Institute, 2015). The journey has provided me with insight into understanding others as well as contributing towards my research, which endeavours to empower middle leaders and teachers of Māori learners.

My background

This research embedded a culturally responsive worldview. From a Māori worldview, I had to reflect and consider my own cultural identity and journey through the Māori way of learning and my approach to understanding others. My bloodline is very diverse and complex to understand and learn. I was born in Whangarei, New Zealand. My father is Filipino, with his mother Magdalena, identifying as Portuguese and his father, Leodigario, as Filipino. My mother was born and began her education in Ngaruawahia, Waikato. Our grandmother (nee Burke) had Māori bloodline of Ngāi Tahu iwi; however, through her upbringing she was never allowed to identify or acknowledge such a culturally diverse heritage. My parents met in Papua New Guinea, with my father migrating to New Zealand in 1977 to be employed as a boiler-maker welder, and they settled and raised our family in Whangarei, Northland.

To this day, my siblings and I are always seeking to find out and learn more about our whakapapa. We all have tamariki (children) and value the opportunities to understand more of who we are and what we are representing each day, as such removing the cycle of disconnection towards our identity, as our mother's side did for many years. It is with this experience that I was exposed to a range of cultures and complexities associated with a parent attempting to assimilate, which inevitably challenged my perspectives about self-identity.

The generational struggle is influential in how children feel and view their sense of self, which impacts on how they experience learning. I was raised with strong values and morals which motivated me to reclaim my identity and success as my own – not one being handed to me. I believe my practice and position in education adheres to these values. My passion as an educator is to ensure every child is given the opportunity to succeed on their own path – not one that is shaped and forced upon them by others. It is vital throughout all levels in education that knowing others and building relationships that foster individual growth and confidence is evident.

My background provides insight into my Māori worldview. This offers context and substance around my values and tikanga in which I employed an indigenous approach throughout the research process. Now I turn to an explanation of how I put this approach into action in my research.

Research design

The research used a thematic analysis of qualitative data collected by two methods: semi-structured interviews with leaders; and an online survey with teachers. The Ministry of Education documents guided the research questions as well as the questioning framework for the data collection methods. Kāupapa Māori supports the approach to gather and understand knowledge of others which presents thematic relationships of information. Kāupapa Māori values of kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (don't trample over the dignity of the people) (Smith, 1999) remained authentic and fundamental throughout the research. The consideration of others, while designing my research and interacting with participants, supported Kāupapa Māori. The invaluable meetings and discussions with my supervisor, consultations with Māori representatives, and considering the audience I am writing to throughout the dissertation, reflected tikanga and respect. In the following sections the methods employed in the research are each explained: semi-structured interviews; and an online survey from participating schools.

Method one: Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews description

The semi-structured interviews allowed for the insight and perspectives of two middle leaders as well as providing them with an opportunity to elaborate and justify their experiences and ideas. Open questions (reflecting the value kia tūpato, being cautious) explored background experiences that the middle leaders employed in their primary schools to support teachers. Open-ended questions are more flexible and allow for probing where misunderstandings can be clarified, and they encourage rapport between the participant and the researcher (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). Bernard (2002) describes:

> The essential element in successful interviewing as earning how to probe effectively – that is, to stimulate a respondent to produce more information, without injecting yourself so much into the interaction that you only get a reflection of yourself in the data. (p. 217)

Cohen et al. (2011) define the important element of prompts in interviewing as "being able to clarify topics or questions, whereas probes enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate or add to responses" (p.351). Cohen et al. (2011) support the narratives of semi-structured interviews in the following quote:

> Although the interviewer has little control over the unstructured response, it does ensure that the respondent has the freedom to give her own answer as fully as she chooses rather than being constrained in some way by the nature of the question. (p.419)

The flexibility noted by Cohen et al. (2011) supports Kāupapa Māori principles, as the story and experiences of individuals are rich and valued as their own. On the other hand, such flexibility may present challenges in coding and analysing the individual responses.

I thoroughly explored other methods to collect data for my research and found similarities in methods such as focus groups and closed interviews. Bryman (2012) and Cohen et al. (2011) describe focus groups as a method which encourages participants to interact with one another, and they explain that it relies heavily on those interactions to prompt and support discussions. Cohen et al. (2011) emphasise that "using a structured interview with closed questions would not enable participants to add comments or remarks with any explanation" (349). Therefore, I believe focus groups and structured interviews may have detracted from my purpose in capturing the rich and subjective experiences as well as narratives of identified middle leaders. Furthermore, it was imperative to demonstrate flexibility and focus on the experiences of each middle leader, which I believe the semi-structured interview allowed.

Semi-structured interview process

Semi-structured interviews (Appendix F) were used as one method of data collection. I ensured that there was adequate planning and preparation with the advertisement and the participant sheet (Appendix A and Appendix B) in order to successfully achieve my objectives in the research design. The participant's consent (Appendix D) was also obtained prior to the interview. Whakawhanaungatanga (the relationship of people working together) demonstrated the distinct relationship between each leader and myself through the prior emails and supportive communication surrounding a current and trending issue in New Zealand education. The setting of the interviews encompassed he kanohi kitea (face to face) and confidentiality. The location of their workplaces and the date were negotiated with each participant in order to formalise the hui. To guarantee the accuracy of each interview, a recording device was used. Prior to the interview the recording device was checked, and each leader was reminded the interview would be recorded (Bryman, 2012).

The interview schedule (Appendix F) was developed as a guide. I began with an opening statement which productively set the tone throughout the hui. By interviewing middle leaders individually, I was able to obtain in-depth information and data. Titiro, whakarongo …korero (look, listen…before speaking) reflected Kāupapa Māori tikanga into gathering authentic, rich and qualitative information. This is in keeping with Cohen et al.'s (2011) statement that "to retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within" (p.21). Manaaki ki te tangata (sharing and hosting generously) demonstrated an awareness of respectful approaches throughout the interview. I provided semi-structured questions that endeavoured to investigate the middle leader's background information, the roles and skills they demonstrated to support teachers, the barriers that exist in supporting teachers to engage Māori learners in the classroom, and possible improvements they could identify that support teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools. Kaua e takahia te mana o tangata (not trampling on people's dignity) was embedded in my approach as I was building my understanding while conducting interviews. The narrative provided me with authentic experiences and understanding around middle leadership, as kia māhaki (sharing my

understanding in being humble) was employed. Finally, I shared my appreciation for the participants' time and valuable insight into their current role. I also reassured them that their anonymity and confidentiality would be assured as well as making arrangements for them to review the transcript at a later date.

Method two: Online Survey

Online survey description

Cohen et al. (2011) describe open-ended questions as an important feature of online surveys that provides more detail around rich experiences. Cohen et al. (2011) support open-ended questions, arguing that they can catch the "authenticity, richness, depth of responses and honesty" (p.393) which provides qualitative research with quality coverage and reliability. An online survey can be specific because the participants (in this case, experienced teachers) are provided with the same questions. The questions and the website tool selected in my research were clear and easy to use as it was important to ensure all participants would be confident that they were able to complete the survey efficiently. This is in keeping with Cohen et al.'s (2011) advice to, "keep the questionnaire simple and easy to complete." (p. 282). In addition, a qualitative survey also supported the opportunity for participants to describe accounts to qualify their responses – a technique recommended by Bryman (2012).

However, there were disadvantages in selecting an online survey method of data collection. I am experienced in using ICT tools; however, not all educators are, so I had to set up various surveys which required a small group of colleagues to blind-test the survey. The responses of this pilot group were deleted once the results were generated. The online survey was designed to impact on teachers and ensure the research process was safe as relationships were respected. A question from the survey asked teachers to scale themselves on how confident they felt about engaging Māori learners in their classroom this year. This is in line with Briggs, Coleman and Morrison's (2012) support for the idea that "researchers not only make their work impact upon research participants but [the] participants impact upon researchers" (p.8). With this in mind, the online survey method was profoundly suitable for the research design.

Online survey process

Experienced teachers completed the online survey with open-ended questions. The online survey (Appendix G) was conducted with experienced teachers associated with the leaders that I interviewed. Once permission to contact staff was approved by the school principal (Appendix H), I was able to contact the school administrator (Appendix A and Appendix C). Each teacher received the survey electronically using the website kwik survey (Appendix G), which also utilised an opportunity to produce an anonymous questionnaire. Teachers were directed throughout the survey with specific questions which supported current evidence and suggestions. Kāupapa Māori tikanga embeds protocols and practices where cultural sensitivity

supports Kia tūpato (being cautious). This was demonstrated in the way questions were initially framed. Questions were carefully constructed, opening with 'how' or 'what' throughout the survey. Keeping the questions specific to the role and the teachers' own experiences was important. The survey gave another perspective and understanding of middle leaders, the relationships and support teachers were receiving from middle leaders linked to engaging Māori students, and the existing barriers that minimised supportive relationships. The sensitivity of any information shared and discussed upheld the need for Kāupapa Māori tikanga kia tūpato (being cautious) because information may have impeded the existing power relationships and experiences in schools. The qualitative survey allowed for answers and statements to be provided electronically and not through he kanohi kitea (meeting of people face to face) which, in turn, assured anonymity for the information given by teachers. Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people) with participants helped ensure that my conduct and manner was culturally appropriate and that each participant was confident to complete the survey.

Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is a non-probability type of qualitative sampling based on characteristics and criteria that align with the research study (Cohen et al. 2011). It was relevant that I employed a purposive sampling approach for the interviews and survey because my research was deliberately seeking successful schools who actively engage and support Māori learners. The sampling process used the following criteria:

1. Primary schools situated in an urban geographic within the Auckland region.
2. State co-educational primary schools with an ERO report dating from 2014 onwards.
3. One primary school of low-to-mid decile and the other of mid-to-high decile rating.
4. Primary schools with a student roll of 20% or more of students who identify as Māori.

Schools

I used current Education Review Office reports on identified schools and further information to ensure the sampling met specific criteria. Cohen (2011) describes this approach as the researcher choosing who they wish to participate based on whether they are suitable for the research study. Therefore, purposive sampling allowed me to employ specific criteria as well as select the schools appropriately. Due to time constraints, the first two schools which met specific criteria were acknowledged and accepted. He kanohi kitea (meeting face to face) with the principal provided support for all likely participants as the relationship between myself and participants was established. The principals and school administrators were provided with information (Appendix B and Appendix C). The school administrator had knowledge of who would be suitable to participate. Through the information provided by school administrators, I was able to identify one experienced middle leader, and three experienced teachers (led by the middle leader) in various levels within each school. Pseudonyms were used to identify each participant. The two participating middle leaders and their school's information is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: School and Middle Leader Participants

	Gender	Ethnicity	Leadership experience in current school	School type and decile	Māori student roll numbers	Latest ERO Report
School One: Mike	Male	NZ Māori NZ Pākeha	7 years	Contributing primary Decile 8	43%	2014
School Two: Sam	Female	NZ European	9 years	Contributing primary Decile 3	21%	2016

Middle leaders

Through purposive sampling, I was able to identify one experienced middle leader in each school who provided sufficient information and current insight into their skills, roles and relationships of support with teachers for engaging Māori learners. Middle leaders who participated received information (Appendix B) to outline the topics I was investigating. A consent form (Appendix D) was sent to each middle leader and questions were answered to ensure participation was voluntary. The research was not compulsory so the pressure to participate was removed from middle leaders. Suitable candidates were also informed that the teachers they were currently leading would be participating in the research.

Teachers

Following the specific criteria for participants, I required only experienced classroom teachers and teachers currently employed in the school that had middle leaders participating. I was able to confirm teachers on a first-in basis due to time constraints. Information was sent to teachers about my research and questions were answered to ensure participation was voluntary. Once the participants gave consent to be involved, they were asked for permission to inform middle leaders and were assured that information described the professional role of leadership rather than their personal qualities. The role of middle leaders was examined not the person demonstrating leadership, therefore I ensured aroha ki te tangata (respect for others) to reassure participants.

Bernard (2002) support purposive sampling as "a tool researchers can use to set out and find people who can and are willing to provide information and knowledge specifically to answer the research questions" (p.240). Kaua e takahia te mana o tangata (do not trample on the mana of the people) was imperative throughout purposive sampling. The sensitivity for all participants and information was acknowledged and respected at all times.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis analyses qualitative data by sorting collected data into common topics. Boyatzis (1998) defined "thematic analysis as a way of seeing qualitative data" (p.4). The analysis was in two parts: coding common themes and patterns from the semi-structured interview transcript, and analysing themes from the online survey results. The values of kaua e takahia te mana o tangata (do not trample on the mana of the people) and titiro, whakarongo … korero (look, listen…speak when it is appropriate) were important to ensure data analysis was approached with a strong understanding of tikanga protocols that supported the authenticity and accuracy.

The initial step of the data analysis was transcribing the interviews. It was important to identify coding patterns and themes within the information being collated and organised. Cohen et al. (2011) support, "Coding enables the researcher to identify similar information" (p.559). With this in mind, once I read the raw data from transcripts, I used Microsoft Word to highlight and identify similar coding from sentences and words.

In analysing transcripts (Appendix I) and survey results (Appendix J), it was important to recognise key words and sub-themes. Identifying the themes contributed towards the research being relevant, authentic and accessible. I re-read the transcripts and comments from participants who completed the survey as I was cross-referencing that sentences were interpreted correctly and contextually appropriate. With this in mind, care and consideration were required through analysis, as information may have led to irrelevant and redundant data. The analysis provided a summary of the patterns of roles, skills and barriers around supporting teachers to engage Māori learners. Through he kanohi kitea (meeting face to face) and kia tūpato (being cautious), I was able to consider and analyse information that represents participants' mahi and understanding. It was imperative to respect people's experiences and understanding as well as supporting Māori views to inform the research authentically, as kaua e takahia te mana o tangata (do not trample on the mana of the people) embeds Kāupapa Māori. Therefore, it was valuable to have an insight into how middle leaders portray their roles within their positions, and the effect this has on teaching and learning.

To ensure validity of analysis it was essential that the surveys were authentic and credible (Fitzgerald, 2012). Fitzgerald (2012) commented that analysing data involves locating themes, analysing these themes and interpreting them into theoretical arguments. Similarly, Mutch (2005) supported coding through patterns and themes in qualitative research. It was important to highlight key words or sentences throughout the data collected. The data collected presented clear themes and sub-themes which evidentially supported the four research questions.

Ethics

Ethics in social research considers the protection of others from harm (Bryman, 2012). In the context of research, Mutch (2005) considered the term ethics as moral principles that guide people. In this study, kaua e takahia te mana o tangata (do not trample on the mana of the people) ensured the participants' experiences were respected and valued. The ethical principles outlined in this research were: consent, confidentiality, anonymity and cultural awareness.

Consent

The impact and considerations relating to informed consent, confidentiality and the acknowledgement of potential consequences for the participants were ethical concerns when conducting research through semi-structured interviews and surveys (Cohen et al., 2011). Once the school principal granted approval for my research, I invited the school's middle leader to participate in the semi-structured interview, and the three teachers from that school to complete an online survey. It was my intention to give middle leaders the choice of being interviewed at AUT or their place of employment, so manaaki ki te tangata (sharing, hosting others) ensured that participants were respectfully invited into others' environments where aroha ki te tangata (respect for others) was evident. It was crucial that I demonstrated sensitivity and kia māhaki (respect and show humility) for all participants (especially the teachers) involved because pressure may have existed from their leader to contribute, respond or complete the survey in a particular manner which was biased towards the middle leader. This meant kia tūpato (being cautious) with the research and showing my awareness to ensure participants were, hopefully, assured that power and pressures were not accepted. I upheld confidentiality and where it was required I obtained informed consent from each participant involved. Subsequent communications, such as making meeting times, were established and communicated with each of the participants directly. As mentioned previously, the online survey allowed information that was gathered from the teacher participants to remain anonymous. My sensitivity, kia tūpato (being cautious) and kia māhaki (finding ways to share my knowledge in being humble), was pertinent throughout participant selection and involvement, and all research processes for the participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity

It is important to consider ethical consequences when storing and managing data collected throughout the research process (Cohen et al., 2011). With this in mind, data was not stored online; an external hard drive to keep and access files was utilised. These files were stored using pseudonym coding to ensure identity and confidentiality remained respected throughout the data-gathering process. It was of grave importance to respect anonymity throughout the small-scale research and using pseudonyms ensured information was not identifiable or any description used recognisable. Kia tūpato (being cautious) tikanga alleviated concerns regarding information being shared, therefore anonymity was assured. Kaua e takahia te

mana o tangata (do not trample on the mana of the people) ensured participants' experiences and stories were respected and securely stored. The external hard drive, consent forms and documentation were stored at all times when not in use in a secure cabinet. These will be stored for six years and upon conclusion the gathered information will be deleted. The transcriptions, individual recordings and documents were deleted and destroyed, following the appropriate guidelines and procedures stated by AUTEC. This was necessary because it was imperative that all responses could not be identifiable as coming from individual participants. Kia tūpato (being cautious) and aroha ki te tangata (respect for others) provided the research with ethical consideration through Kāupapa Māori tikanga.

Cultural awareness

Ethical considerations through cultural sensitivity upheld the Treaty of Waitangi principles. The consultation and considerations remained interwoven right through the small-scale research study. Cultural awareness was focused heavily around the research proposal, and throughout the research design. Inclusion of Kāupapa Māori principles throughout the research ensured information and methods were approached through Māori tikanga protocols. The rights and responsibilities of individuals were established and respected through principles in the Treaty of Waitangi. There was consultation with the identified schools' local kaumatua and whānau groups to ensure cultural sensitivity was being respected. He kanohi kitea (meeting face to face), titiro, whakarongo …korero (look, listen…speak) and manaaki ki te tangata (talking collaboratively) provided relevant Kāupapa Māori approaches for ethical understanding. The impact ethical cultural awareness had on the participant's demonstrated kia tūpato (being cautious) and aroha ki te tangata (respect for people) was evident throughout the process. Consultation was conducted with AUT Māori Advisors to discuss tikanga and kāupapa protocols that supported the research design. The process of communication, relationships, expectations, place of interview and professionalism ensured tikanga remained intact.

Conclusion

The indigenous methodology of Kāupapa Māori provided me with an approach to understand research and the methods employed a Māori worldview that supported the use of a cultural lens into investigating and understanding the practice and knowledge of others. Mead and Mead (2003) stated, "Research and evaluation process, procedures and consultation need to be correct so that in the end everyone who is connected with the research project is enriched, empowered, enlightened and glad to have been a part of it" (p.318). Therefore, Kāupapa Māori Research ensured the participants' knowledge and views were respected and discussed whilst ensuring their mana and truth remained authentic, and therefore that aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people) was evident. The tikanga leads me onto the next chapter where the story and experiences of middle leaders and teachers in Auckland primary schools are discussed and presented.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter follows on from my methodology and presents the findings in the arrangement of the three topics which emerged from the data collected through semi-structured interviews and an online survey. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the key skills and roles middle leaders need to support teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?
2. How well have middle leaders established those skills and roles with teachers?
3. What barriers exist for middle leaders in demonstrating support for teachers engaging Māori learners in their classroom?
4. How could middle leaders improve support for teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?

The data from each semi-structured interview and the information collected through an online survey were categorised thematically as previously described in chapter three. Therefore, by coding the common themes and patterns from each transcript of the semi-structured interviews, and identifying the categories which emerged from the online survey data, three main themes emerged. A table list was utilised which clearly showed the themes and sub-themes that had emerged (see Appendix L). These themes are identified as: the role and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools; professional learning development for middle leaders and teachers; and culturally responsive pedagogy.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows: the three themes are presented in turn, with each theme being made up of a number of sub-themes and a summary section to end each theme. The chapter ends with a short conclusion. The analysis of these results in the context of the existing literature, and consideration of how the themes address the research questions can be found in chapter five.

The participants' names have been removed and pseudonyms have been used throughout the findings. In addition, as the online survey completed by experienced teachers was anonymous, pseudonyms are not reflective of gender, age or school. The names of others, School one and School two, programmes and organisational team names have all been removed or replaced with descriptors. In table 4.1 the pseudonyms used for each participant are presented.

Table 4.1: Participants who contributed towards the collection of data

Middle leaders who contributed in the semi-structured interviews.	Teachers from schools who completed an anonymous online survey.
Mike	Alex
Sam	Brooke
	Casey
	Dallas
	Elliot

Theme one: The roles and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools

The semi-structured interviews and online survey data from both schools showed evidence of the similarities between the way middle leaders and teachers clarified the role and responsibilities of leaders in their schools. It is vital for the schools to ensure that all leaders have a sound understanding of specific responsibilities and roles which also helps ensure these roles are fulfilled effectively. Overall, the similarities were presented as daily responsibilities, such as daily relieving and classroom release organisation, as these were revealed to be common responsibilities, with the exception of leading transition programmes for both primary schools. Evidence suggested there are specific challenges and barriers linked to middle leaders being effective and that these could be minimised through clarity, expertise and competency, and the communication skills demonstrated by middle leaders.

The following sub-themes emerged under the roles and responsibilities: the daily responsibilities middle leaders have within their schools; leading the teaching and learning in schools; building trusting and professional relationships; particular barriers and challenges middle leaders face in schools; and the impact daily demands have on middle leaders in supporting teachers.

The daily responsibilities middle leaders have within their schools

It was evident that both schools had clear descriptors which each middle leader employed within their role. The daily responsibilities interpreted from Mike's job description included: Assistant Principal, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), professional standards of planning, ensuring teaching and assessments are meeting criteria, checking education risk management assessment system (RAMS), and releasing teachers for classroom release time (CRT) so that a teaching component in the bilingual pathway is frequent. It was important for Mike to ensure tikanga protocol were evident and respected school-wide.

Sam had a similar role. However, her school needs were vastly different as her daily responsibilities are more extensive and formal such as: Deputy Principal, SENCo, appraising teachers, relievers confirmation for teachers being sick or on leave, day-to-day organisation, deputising for the principal, running the transition programme for New Entrant students and new whānau, ensuring strong relationships and communication with local early childhood centres and local intermediate schools, and a weekly pānui of upcoming events and communication to whānau.

Each participant briefly listed the range of responsibilities they led within their kura. It is important to note that the duties were summarised from each of their job descriptions. Therefore, the role of a middle leader was clearly defined within each school. There was clear understanding from each middle leader of their specific role and various responsibilities within each school. In addition, such similarities surfaced between the middle leaders during the semi-

structured interviews where they explained and provided recent examples. An example of this is the formal titles and specific responsibilities of each middle leader within their school.

The extensive role described for each middle leader can be overloaded with non-contact classroom responsibilities which impact on developing closer relationships between students and teachers. As Mike described:

> You are going to make mistakes, but you know you are not going to get put down or pushed to the side because this school is not that type of school. It is how you deal with things professionally is that makes this school special for me. Knowing you have positive relationships with others is really important here.

However, along with the relational element, being organised is vitally important, as there is only so much time for the individual responsibilities middle leaders have in schools. Mike added, "In the various responsibilities I have it shows I'm more successful and organised through the relationships I have formed with others and also with parents. To know tikanga is being followed is very important." Moreover, the perceived success of middle leaders in both schools was commonly shared with staff and whanau, which helps to strengthen relationships. Acknowledging the various daily responsibilities middle leaders may have in schools is reassuring as they are working towards better educational outcomes.

Leading teaching and learning

A portion of the middle leader's role is to have responsibility for the teaching and learning across primary schools. In School two the middle leader was identified as the within-school Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako leader. In the survey Elliot clearly stated, "Our middle leaders were leading effective teaching and learning had been strong." Both Sam and Mike explained that their schools' focus was to support and build teachers' practice in walking the talk. Sam noted leading teaching and learning had been effective through:

> The regular meetings and implementing a range of effective strategies to engage Māori learners. We have also critically analysed relevant readings. As part of leading it was important to collaboratively take a snapshot of classrooms which were based around our school values as a way of seeing our strengths and our next steps.

Mike spoke of their school curriculum and learning as combining the two worlds: "Leaders and teachers are constantly seeking different ways and theories pedagogically in what learning looks like in the classroom, and how our teachers are working with students to meet the necessary standards is vital within our kura."

Both middle leaders acknowledged specific responsibilities of checking that planning, classroom programmes and current assessments were meeting the necessary criteria. There were also opportunities for Mike (in the role of Assistant Principal/Team Leader) to release teachers on CRT, which also provided opportunities for him to support ongoing classroom programmes.

In the survey, all of the teacher participants strongly agreed that middle leaders in their school were supportive and contributed towards improving their pedagogy. Elliot commented, "The middle leader in my school has an open door where I am able to ask questions and get feedback, especially when setting up new learning programmes in the classroom for students who are not achieving."

The specific areas of curriculum pedagogy and assessment were defined by each school. The areas for development were based on school policies and programmes. School two is a part of a Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako which provides teachers with support and networks as well as offering relevant professional learning. The middle leadership team in this school was heavily involved in implementing strategies to support teachers, support learners and engage whānau. Teachers also commented on the substantial support they received in staff meetings from middle leaders, and their provision of relevant readings to offer strategies which impacted on Māori learners. The online survey data revealed particular ways middle leaders were responsible for leading in their schools. Dallas commented, "There have been some really interesting discussions and changes as a result of the cultural competency our leadership team and the school are a part of through the Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako." Brooke also commented:

> I feel much supported by my leadership team at this school to engage Māori learners and work within programmes that support students. The conversations and resources are helpful and I can see they have had an impact on students, especially the Māori students.

Building trusting relationships and professional relationships

Building trusting and professional relationships was strongly spoken about by both middle leaders interviewed. They noted a strong focus around establishing trusting professional relationships and honest conversations, which all come from aroha and manaaki. This enabled professional and also trusting communication with not only teachers but also the school whānau. In addition, the relationships were validated as being developed over a number of years. Both Sam and Mike stated that building trusting relationships was a necessary part of the role for middle leaders. Mike reflected, "Having absolute faith where he's got your back, she's got my back, and ensuring one's mana remains intact. If I am going to say I am doing something, I must do just that." Mike and Sam both reflected on their assessment of how they are professional with teachers and whānau. Mike believed his long serving time at the kura has shaped and evolved his professionalism as often he would be in the whānau or circles of whānau. It was important he ensured his role was professional and this had supported stronger relationships with whānau and the community. Moreover, being the deputy principal can be a prestigious yet formal title within a school. Sam described how she maintains positive relationships at the heart of all she does with staff, students and the local community. Sam commented, "It's like I am sometimes the face of our school."

The teachers confirmed through the online survey that their middle leader demonstrated caring and trusting relationships with colleagues, students and whānau. These qualities supported particular school values and the values also impacted on the culture within the school. Mike confidently stated, "It is all about relationships. The relationships with our teachers; the relationships to our parents; the relationships to the wider school; also knowing your place within those relationships." Sam had a similar understanding of building positive relationships:

Relationships are a big part of what we do here. We are committed to our students and whānau. I have been here for a number of years and the staff feel comfortable and safe coming to me to discuss challenges they are facing. So I guess, for me that is positive – I have not heard otherwise.

Alex commented through the online survey that:

Strong relationships with middle leaders and students support me [as the teacher] to engage Māori learners with a variety of learning approaches. I agree that the trust I have with my middle leader encourages us to continue building a trusting relationship through questions and support I receive.

Both middle leaders (Mike and Sam) reflected that the foundations in building trusting and professional relationships with teachers and whānau are important. As Mike put it:

Showing others that we as middle leaders are walking the talk with aroha and manaaki, and also ensuring one's mana is always intact is very important. These relationships support the open to learning conversations where it is necessary that we all continue to be learners.

Both middle leaders (Mike and Sam) recognised 'professionalism comes with the job' and they both continued to perform the best they could. Mike went on to mention, "Understanding others' and listening to others is powerful and can be the most important part of my role." The professional relationships which had trust, communication and honesty between the middle leaders and the teachers were evident in both schools.

The particular barriers and challenges middle leaders are facing in schools

The middle leaders' responsibilities that extend school-wide can create a busy environment and both middle leader participants regarded this as a major challenge in their role. The continual demands that extend past their role often interrupted or impeded particular responsibilities. Mike and Sam presented the following barriers and challenges linked to the busy environment as: supporting teachers delivering the curriculum in two languages; keeping pedagogy relevant and current for the needs of all students; building positive relationships where open conversations can improve practice; and ensuring systems and programmes are organised so they are able to stay on top of the daily demands that may be presented for each school.

The awareness of focusing on tikanga protocols was strong and heavily prioritised in the school programmes. It is vital that programmes are consistent and effective so that, in many cases, they are self-running and therefore may allow sustainability school-wide. As Mike commented, "The tikanga protocols being implemented in activities and events should be just what we do and where middle leaders are not necessarily needed to supervise." There was evidence to support that schools were becoming more reliant on individual skills and expertise rather than building more teams of leaders within the kura. Mike spoke of challenges in his kura as:

> We are asking our tamariki to learn and be successful in two worlds – one that of Māori and one of Pakeha. They are learning, and our teachers are delivering programmes in two languages. There are no clear ways to build oral language strategies in classrooms, so it becomes dependent on individual teachers to learn and improve their Te Reo language. My job is to support those teachers and we are always doubting our level of reo and competency.

Similarly, Sam spoke of her challenges being:

> My own understanding of Te Reo and tikanga has improved. We have some staff who may be more receptive than others. But, the time I have to ensure my responsibilities are completed can change daily as there seems to be more to do. I think it is important to be organised and ensure I am putting in the time in all areas. Therefore, I value walking the talk, so it is important I am seen to be doing this. I think my staff and community value this which is a big part of our leadership and school values.

It is clear that the particular responsibilities for both middle leaders were diverse with clear challenges. Their role needed to be balanced between administrative functions and leading the teaching and learning school-wide. There were many similarities in these responsibilities between the two schools; however, each school has shaped the role of their middle leaders and certain daily responsibilities which are derived from individual needs. Each middle leader participant was clear about the barriers they face, however, they were confident and clear about how the responsibilities impacted on their role with students, colleagues and whānau.

The impact daily demands have on middle leaders in supporting teachers

The term impact emerged in the way middle leaders identified possible limitations or reduced time in order to demonstrate their numerous roles and responsibilities. There were common examples that impacted upon the success and smooth operations of school programmes and support for teachers. For example, the impact middle leaders could have in schools and on teachers could be determined or restricted due to time they have to coordinate their responsibilities effectively. Mike commented, "I am always checking on others, checking on programmes and if they are being done properly. But also, I am doing my best to fit in time with others, so our teachers feel confident and listened to."

The online survey asked teachers to provide scale ratings on how effective middle leaders in their schools were in covering daily responsibilities. The rating scores that were presented suggested each middle leader had different responsibilities. However, the most common barrier revealed was the lack of time each middle leader had each day. Casey, Dallas and Elliot all found middle leaders to have limited time for professional conversations and resourcing for differentiated programmes. Evidence that was collected from the semi-structured interview indicated this when Mike expressed, "A lot of time was being heavily consumed by the daily administrative tasks such as checking and writing RAMs for events and trips, covering relievers or classes, checking paper work such as planning and assessments."

In addition, the survey revealed Elliot describing support as:

> "There was a lack of support for me as the class numbers are tending to increase and be on the higher end which makes catering for all students difficult. So, if my middle leader was more available I could seek further support."

There were a range of challenges discussed in the semi-structured interview with each middle leader. For example, Sam wanted to ensure she was doing her best to capture the challenges before they became barriers. She said:

> It is a team effort. It is not just me here. I cannot take all the credit as we listen and discuss issues or challenges as a team, and we problem-solve together to improve the outcomes. Being organised is extremely important and knowing others. When they are stressed or become overwhelmed it is a sign, but having the relationship to help and support others when it is needed and not asked; I feel I am valued in doing just that.

The daily demands for middle leaders in primary schools revealed common trends through minimal time for explicit support. Therefore, it was important to note that middle leaders had invested time into building relationships through reassuring teachers that they were feeling listened to and supported. There were positive ways in which the relationships between students, teachers, middle leaders and whānau were nurtured.

Summary for theme one: the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools

The roles and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools have been described by the two experienced middle leaders in this study. There were accounts presented by each middle leader that reflected professionalism, relationships and communication. However, notable barriers and challenges were discussed, that linked to them demonstrating their responsibilities effectively. For example, a challenge was the time and daily pressure to ensure responsibilities were covered to engage students and whānau. They noted that it was essential to have clear systems in place which provide a safe, common understanding from others.

Theme two: Professional Learning Development (PLD)

PLD is a key element in building the skills and strategies for teachers to be more effective in the classroom. The focus and need around PLD was determined by the middle and senior leaders from the schools and the success and engagement of PLD was varied in both schools. The data collection for this topic related to middle leaders tikanga, how each school utilised PLD school-wide, and the PLD provided by Ministry of Education for middle leaders and teachers.

Each school in this study identified areas of development that could be suitable for teachers, middle leaders and tikanga. The following sub-themes which emerged through each method in the data collection were: PLD for middle leaders; support with engaging Māori students in the classroom; and improving practice through Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako.

PLD for middle leaders

There were numerous PLD opportunities for middle leaders. As Mike put it, "Te Reo language courses, engaging Māori learners, oral language to just name a few." Alex also commented:

> We are lucky with our leaders, they know their skills and do their best to keep us updated with what resources are out there to continue supporting me in the classroom. I am an experienced mainstream teacher and have recently shifted into the 'newer teacher' mind-set where I am teaching in the bilingual structure. Any support in assessments in Māori and Pakeha has been helpful and readily available to me.

The consideration and focus of PLD around Māori student achievement and engagement was evident in both primary schools. There was a clear focus on teacher practice, and evidence from teacher appraisals reflected a range of skills in Te Ao Māori learning. Sam explained, "A couple of us on staff are doing a Māori language course." Likewise, Brooke shared from a teacher's perspective, "I have completed Level 2 courses in Te Reo Māori and this was encouraged by my colleagues especially as we have bilingual and rumaki on our school site."

In both schools the middle leaders expressed their active approach to improve their Te Reo by completing language courses through Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. This learning has been successful as both middle leaders are often supporting teachers with Te Ao Māori in the classroom. As Sam humbly said: "I am not by all means the expert, but I have put time in so that I am more skilled and confident to support teachers when they come to me. I am also very lucky to have fluent Te Reo speakers on staff who I can also call upon to clarify when I am stuck."

The online survey asked teachers to identify how middle leaders had supported them to engage Māori students in their classroom. Table 4.2 summarises the anonymous responses from teachers in the online survey.

Table 4.2: Accounts from teachers into the way middle leaders demonstrate support

Alex	There is support by leadership to engage Māori in my classroom, students in the wider school environment. Our leaders are working hard to show a "Walk the talk style of leadership" as they have learnt Te Reo and aspects of Te Ao Māori.
Brooke	Our middle leader's expertise in Te Ao Māori has been supporting me in my own teaching of New Zealand's bi-cultural history (Māori and Pakeha). I feel safe to ask for guidance and help. Celebrating Matariki, pōwhiri, tikanga waiata, karakia greetings and commands across a range of subjects through modelling tikanga is seen everywhere.
Casey	Our middle leaders demonstrate the cultural values and practices we have re-established in our school. Encouraging discussions with other school leaders across both pathways in the school.
Dallas	Our middle leaders have stronger professional relationships and have supported me to implement a variety of learning structures.
Elliot	No comment was provided

The online survey showed clarity in that middle leaders demonstrated support for engaging Māori students through expertise and opportunities. There was sufficient evidence to suggest teachers were supported by middle leaders by modelling tikanga and furthering their own learning through language courses. The teachers described how their middle leader was being supportive and guided them in developing a range of strategies that engaged Māori learners in their classroom, for example, through the celebration of Matariki and pōwhiri. There was also evidence of middle leaders furthering their own learning to ensure they would be more confident to support teachers and students. As Sam put it, "I have completed the Level two Te Reo course at the local wānanga."

PLD and support with engaging Māori students in the classroom

Te Reo Māori learning was their choice and each middle leader has furthered their own professional pathway according to the needs of their kura and their capabilities. It was clear that teachers have recognised this too because they are often seeking clarification and support. Table 4.3 summarises anonymous responses from teachers in both schools about the support to develop Te Ao Māori.

Table 4.3 Online survey responses from teachers explaining the culturally responsive PLD they have been receiving

	PLD
Alex	Teachers are encouraged to develop their own Te Reo fluency. Māori students are not recognised as being any different to any of my other students, so whatever tools or resources he needs to support him in his learning I feel our leaders are able to help us implement those strategies.
Brooke	Nothing specific for Māori learners but we have onsite Te Wānanga o Aotearoa classes to learn Te Ara Reo Māori. The support I also get from the immersion and bilingual teachers is valuable.
Casey	Our staff have regular professional development meetings on engagement for Māori learners
Dallas	Our school is doing a great job regarding cultural responsiveness and we have some staff learning Te Reo.
Elliot	A big part of our professional development is the collaborative learning groups with 'culture counts' which will also continue next year.

The online survey summarised the evident opportunities for teachers to be engaging in PLD through the Te Wāngana o Aotearoa to build oracy and skills in Te Ara Reo Māori. The school-wide PLD was also incorporating culturally responsive pedagogies and focusing around improving Māori student engagement that is relevant and authentic to the needs of each school.

Ministry of Education initiative: Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako

School two is actively involved in a Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako group that has been working on culturally responsive pedagogy. As Elliot shared, "The professional development is being shared across all staff to improve strategies and programmes to support Māori learners. The teachers are receiving current and authentic support to improve achievement for Māori." Sam made reference to the network as:

> This Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako is going to impact what we have with the initiatives around student attendance, engagement and, ultimately, Māori achievement. The Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako is interlocking what we are doing and how we can do things better here; this in itself is beneficial for our tamariki.

Through the data collection, it was suggested that relevant PLD was being delivered through the Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako. The focus towards improving Māori student engagement and achievement through culturally responsive pedagogy had been an area for development. The Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako PLD suggested teachers and leaders were supported towards improving the engagement and success of Māori in the classrooms.

Summary for theme two: PLD

The importance of PLD was a theme that emerged through data. Middle leaders and teachers were seemingly on similar pages where they identified a need to improve classroom practice and skills. The school leadership team also collaborated and ensured schools were utilising this

time wisely. It has been important for middle leaders to continue improving their pedagogy as teachers are becoming more confident to follow their lead. PLD for middle leaders, PLD and support to engage Māori students in the classroom, and the Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako are all pathways to better outcomes for all students.

Theme three: culturally responsive pedagogy

An important theme emerging from this research was the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy. The middle leader's role could be challenging in terms of how they were demonstrating culturally responsive pedagogy. The following sub-themes that emerged in the data associated with culturally responsive pedagogy were as follows: how the daily demands impact on supporting teachers with culturally responsive practice; new leadership teams being formed in school; and culturally responsive relationships through care and trusting communication.

How the daily demands impact on supporting teachers with culturally responsive practice

The online survey revealed an assortment of feedback in relation to the amount of culturally responsive pedagogy evident in each school. Teachers were asked to provide a brief description about the challenges or barriers they face when focusing on engaging Māori learners in the classroom. Their experiences, summarised in Table 4.4, reflect examples of 'common' school challenges in primary schools.

Table 4.4: Challenges or barriers to engaging Māori learners in the classroom

Teachers	The challenges or barriers teachers are experiencing in their classrooms
Alex	Class numbers are certainly too high. I still give myself a bit of a hard time regarding my own Te Reo fluency.
Brooke	Picking the right topic or learning style which suits most learners or have the right balance of both.
Casey	I find it difficult at times to encourage support from home, for example, reading each night.
Dallas	I am not Māori myself and at times it can be difficult to form good relationships with Māori whānau, while also having limited Te Reo Māori. I have a young family and teaching is demanding so I am not able to commit to lessons after school.
Elliot	The lack of extra support in classes as the class numbers tend to be high, which makes high numbers of students underachieving difficult to cater for.

The summaries provided by the teachers in Table 4.4 capture authentic challenges and barriers to engaging Māori students in the classroom. The typical challenges teachers had expressed were described variably as increased class sizes through to the lack of time and skills in culturally responsive practice. Class sizes are a constant concern and were evident across both schools. These are typical barriers as the increasing numbers of enrolled students have been placing pressures upon teachers directly. The minimal confidence teachers have in their own skill and competency in Te Ao Māori was identified as a barrier in classrooms. Teachers need to

feel supported to learn and build strategies that are going to be effective and engage Maori students in their classroom. It is vital in education that schools provide teachers with these opportunities because this directly impacts on our priority learners i.e. those identified as Māori.

The online survey results were reflective of the endless skills teachers are expected to acquire, and the real challenges they face. Teachers were also asked to briefly describe their experiences in creating culturally responsive classrooms. This question sought their understanding of what is happening, what needs to improve and, how teachers are implementing practices in the classroom. Their experiences are presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: The teachers' description of culturally responsive classroom

	Describing own experiences in creating a culturally responsive classroom
Alex	I have been teaching a long time, and my current school out shines all previous schools regarding culturally responsive practices. I have an open relationship with the whānau. Everything we teach here makes links to tikanga/Te Reo/Māori history.
Brooke	I always try to create a space that is student-centred which maximises student learning. I use what I know about the students to help with the layout. Space is created to display student work or achievement and this is done with the students. Class treaties are evident so students know what is expected, feel safe and are able to learn. Children are empowered to make choices on how they share their learning with others.
Casey	Everyone works for everyone and no one is excluded.
Dallas	It is difficult, but I see it being worthwhile for Māori learners. Things need to become more routine and it has been difficult to engage fully in the ideas with so many other parts of teaching making high demands on time.
Elliot	Encouraging all children to talk about and share their culture, celebrating children's areas of 'expertise', always talking about and demonstrating ways we display our school values.

The accounts from each teacher summarised particular experiences of relationships, class treaties, and encouraging the students to share their identities and culture. Teachers' clarification on what a culturally responsive classroom looks and feels like revealed common understandings. It seems that the points raised by the teachers aligned with the thinking of both Sam and Mike about the impact and understanding of how daily demands impact on teachers. Classroom teachers were aware of knowing their learners and the way Māori students learn best is through providing opportunities for their authorities to be shared. The relationships established between teachers and Māori learners were authentic so that students felt valued, confident and engaged in all learning. Therefore, the impact daily responsibilities have on middle leaders to support teachers engaging Māori learners in the classroom can vary from school to school.

New leadership teams being formed in school

The semi-structured interview transcripts from both middle leaders revealed that both schools had new principals. The similarities presented were evident as the schools are going through re-valuing the school and improving culturally responsive pedagogy. There are school initiatives which have continued but more significantly there are obvious changes happening for both schools. This seems timely as both middle leader participants spoke positively about upcoming events, policies and changes to the school-wide structures. Mike commented:

> We have a new whare being built and much discussion and planning has gone into providing our rumaki and bilingual classes an authentic space to base their learning. It was not about just putting a building over there. It was about the ritual, the kāupapa in where and why we are having this building.

Sam said:

> As of next year, the classes are being changed and moved. We are restructuring the classes, so you have Year 1-6 ages in blocks. The tuakana-teina approach is going to not only support our tamariki but also our teachers.

These are some of the major changes the new principals have put in place. It was spoken of fondly and with recognition of what was there, and the direction both schools are moving in. Similarly, Dallas commented through the online survey, "Re-valuing the school motto and teachers are implementing this in the classroom and school-wide. It has revived the school."

Culturally responsive relationships through care and trusting communication

The data consistently showed middle leaders having strong relationships with others. The care and trust of the middle leaders enabled culturally responsive relationships that were collaborative and safe and encouraged colleagues. As Mike described, the characteristics of how he demonstrates caring and trusting relationships with teachers include:

> Listening and understanding others, manaakitanga tikanga, sense of loyalty to build relationships over a long period of time. I guess my simplest one is to listen to them and to see how and what skills they have, what knowledge they have and how we can work to the best of our strengths collectively – whānaungatanga.

Sam described, "Learning in shared partnership, seeking the support of expertise through an open-door policy. We have fluent Te Reo speakers and they are happy for me to support those who are less confident." Care and trust is imperative and through kanohi kite kanohi it was clear both middle leaders have expressed this to be a vital part of their support. Middle leaders must have open conversations that remain professional in order to continue building the care and trust through their relationships with teachers. Mike noted:

> I am the person of two worlds meeting – like the resource because I am in the middle of those worlds of our school leadership team and the other whānau, our learners. I

connect between the parents and the teachers where my role also allows me to connect with senior leaders, so I am able to have a hand in all different levels of relationships.

Sam also expressed:

Our school has an open-door policy. We have done whānau surveys and it was strongly acknowledged that we have a welcoming approach. We re-valued our school and implemented these at the beginning of the year. Whānau appreciate that we do try to use Te Reo authentically in assemblies, pōwhiri and those things are noticed. We value and prioritise walking the talk and it is part of what we just do here. It is important for me to continue improving my relationships through communication and action within my role of Deputy Principal.

Building trusting relationships – whānaungatanga - was consistently spoken about by both Sam and Mike as they were working alongside teachers to engage Māori learners. They were familiar with whanau and ways to improve the school relationships with the wider communities. They both expressed the importance of having trusting interpersonal relationships so that open and constructive communication is employed between middle leaders and teachers. The data collection showed that relationships with open communication has an impact on Māori learners being engaged and successful in the classroom.

Summary of theme three: culturally responsive pedagogy

The barriers that were identified from middle leaders in terms of demonstrating support for teachers to engage Māori learners were extensive. They included the lack of time middle leaders have to support teachers with engaging Māori learners due to daily demands, the increasing class sizes in schools resulting in relevant learning opportunities being weakened, and teachers' lack of confidence to engage Māori learners in being more culturally responsive. There are many factors which contribute to obvious barriers to engaging in culturally responsive practice however the interviews showed that middle leaders have been developing strong relationships with others. The culturally responsive relationships middle leaders establish with teachers through care, trust and open communication may also improve classroom practices. Sam stated, "The staff need to feel supported and encouraged."

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was evident that professional relationships were strong between the teachers, students, whānau and leaders. The first theme of roles and responsibilities of middle leaders in primary schools was discussed and supported with examples derived from middle leaders themselves and experienced teachers. Teachers have affirmed that trust and professional relationships with leaders are important and encourage them to seek support and expertise within their school. The second theme, PLD, was highlighted through further opportunities towards improving culturally responsive practice as the direction that schools were working in was welcomed and supported by both schools. The data reflects that the participants were

aware of the school's needs and focus around using Te Ao Māori, which was also warmly welcomed by whānau from both schools. There were two teachers who expressed they were less confident in their skills to engage Māori learners. In both cases, networks like the Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako groups were being established where they might seek further support. The final theme was culturally responsive pedagogy and how it successfully contributed towards the school ethos, middle leaders, teachers and Māori learners in primary schools.

Overall, it can be seen that many interesting insights and implications surfaced from these findings. The next chapter will attempt to discuss in further depth the role and responsibilities for middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools and the impact these findings have on teachers engaging Māori learners to be more successful in the classroom. This chapter will compare and contrast these findings with literature along with the Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations derived from this small-scale study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS.

My research presents a critical analysis of the previous chapter, the findings. Through the discussion there is coverage of existing literature along with new findings that pertain to the accounts received from experienced middle leaders and teachers of New Zealand primary schools in my own study. The experiences and accounts from those participants are reflective of their experiences and are not generalisations made about all middle leaders and teachers in New Zealand primary schools.

The discussion will draw upon the formulated research questions driving my study. This chapter is presented in four sections: a discussion that considers the findings and how these are aligned with literature; the conclusions that have been derived from the discussion; key recommendations; and the limitations which were present throughout my research study.

Section one: Discussion

Research question one: What are the key skills and roles middle leaders need to support teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?

The findings of this study addressed the extensive skills and role of middle leaders daily. There was clear understanding pertaining to their invaluable role. This understanding was derived from participants i.e. the teachers and middle leaders.

Responsibilities of middle leaders

The findings of my research reiterated the extensive skills and responsibilities middle leaders need to lead teaching and learning in New Zealand primary schools. The body of literature from Bassett (2016) and Harris and Jones (2017) affirmed that they hold pivotal and unique roles in schools. This is consistent with the responses given by middle leaders in my study, and the clear descriptors that explained the list of responsibilities they are expected to face daily. As noted in literature, there are numerous terms used in the ways schools define the middle leader, from curriculum head to deputy principal (Basset, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2006). In my study, this is supported through summarised responsibilities reported by middle leaders in chapter four as: leading the professional development pathways; mentoring new teachers; and sustaining SENCo – roles that are heavily situated around programming and support. The findings revealed that the two schools rely heavily on their middle leaders to implement a wide range of school organisational systems such as: transition programmes; classroom release; pōwhiri; pānui (notices); and weekly assemblies. The findings in my study are consistent with the Ministry of Education (2012) and Jones (2006) who described the role and skills middle leaders are required to demonstrate as putting them in an ambiguous situation within schools. The enormity of the role and skills required have been shared by participants in my study as they discussed the common challenges and barriers such as time, administrative demands, and conflicting schedules of ongoing personal development. Teachers who participated in the

research associated their understanding of the middle leader role as being extensive and complex. The diverse and overloaded roles required by middle leaders reflected the consequence of limited time to fully support teachers to engage Māori learners has been clearly expressed.

Leading teaching and learning

Firstly, the findings of my research showed that both schools benefitted greatly from the extensive set of skills of their middle leaders and received a substantial amount of pedagogical knowledge from them. Throughout my findings, both middle leaders' demonstrated expertise and their skills ranged from daily organisation to supporting teachers and students in the classroom. Piloting professional development and revising school programmes is also supported through the research of Basset (2016), Heng and Marsh (2009) and the Ministry of Education (2012). It was also noted that middle leaders in my study have capabilities associated with tikanga responsibilities such as pōwhiri and teaching bilingual classes.

In addition, my research findings showed that the middle leaders' competency in Te Reo Māori was utilised and supported by the school and wider communities. Teachers were confident to work alongside middle leaders as well as strengthening personal practice with professional pathways being included to further learning, in particular in Te Ao Māori. Heng and Marsh (2009) supported professional pathways by suggesting that middle leaders can support teachers through coaching and mentoring in skilled areas. The teachers in my study recognised the support and opportunities which have successfully provided them with the tools and strategies to engage Māori learners in their classroom. This support is also reflected through the environments teachers have established as shown in their examples and responses such as, creating cultural learning opportunities and establishing a responsive culture within the classroom by devising class treaties and tikanga practices.

Curriculum pedagogy and leadership

My research clearly provided examples where an open-door policy from middle leaders provided teachers with a model and enabled them to improve classroom practice. In support of teaching, Marshall (2012) discussed the impact of curriculum pedagogy promoting classroom learning. The relationships middle leaders in my study established by being approachable and available for staff was spoken of fondly by both middle leaders and teachers. Teachers reaffirmed their understanding of how leaders are being effective in terms of the support with in-class programmes and suggested approaches to targeting high learning needs or class sizes daily. It was reported from three teachers that there are pathways of communication in place and systems to clarify any misunderstandings or confusions around teachers' practice. As mentioned earlier, the middle leaders both reported it was their responsibility to contribute to establishing tikanga practices school-wide.

Through research gathered around the middle leaders' role, the participants in my study have noted that they felt they were fulfilling their numerous roles adequately. There can be many layers that contribute to middle leaders being supportive and effective in their role which can also be evident through the successes seen in primary school classrooms daily.

Research question two: How well have middle leaders established those skills and roles with teachers?

The middle leaders responded in depth to the second question of this research study. From the findings in my study, there were clear examples showing the many ways middle leaders have supported and modelled teaching and learning across schools.

Professional knowledge

The extensive skills middle leaders need may also impact on teachers and students in their schools. In documents such as Leading from the Middle, the Ministry of Education (2012) cited, "Middle leaders work with and support classroom teachers and students, providing pedagogical and pastoral leadership and fulfilling various administrative functions" (p.7). In my study, teachers reported on middle leaders furthering Te Ao Māori language learning to support the school vision and structure. My research also found that middle leaders have extensive responsibilities in New Zealand primary schools. The Ministry of Education (2012) documents *Leading from the Middle* and the *ELM* are integral for leaders to establish and employ the role effectively. Fitzgerald and Gunter (2006) further supported a requirement for middle leaders to establish a collaborative and cohesive environment that enables teachers to work effectively in a supported way. Cardno (2006) specifically shared the importance of collaborative decision-making. Such decision-making was also supported in my research by both middle leaders as they shared reasoning and examples of the range of responsibilities they are expected to carry out.

Establishing caring relationships

Through my research it was apparent that establishing and building relationships was crucial within the role of middle leaders. It was also clear that the relationships established a strong foundation between middle leaders and teachers. The success middle leaders expressed about the interpersonal relationships they have was also built in partnership with colleagues. Cardno (2012) and Fitzgerald and Gunter (2006) reiterated that building relationships was an integral element of effective leadership. The middle leaders I interviewed shared strong examples that described how they contributed towards building caring relationships. The teachers who participated recalled having a supportive middle leader who was seen to work with everybody on staff, the students and the wider community. The care and attention they invested into building relationships was described in both schools, despite each school working with new principals. My research findings showed that the middle leaders and teachers established

caring relationships that were described as inclusive for everyone. The relationships between teachers and middle leaders impact on the work they are doing to improve classroom practice (Cardno, 2012).

Open and trusting communication

My research findings suggested that middle leaders who provided teachers with the trust, care and communication to work collaboratively proved to have positive outcomes school-wide. Furthermore, my research presented examples where teachers felt their middle leader had collaborative environments that fostered effective interpersonal communication. Cardno (2012) supported the integrity of demonstrating and building relationships where interpersonal communication is valued and respected. Jones (2006) and Gurr & Drysdale (2013) supported feedback through communication pathways that are nurtured and developed between leaders and teachers. In my study, there were shared examples of providing teachers with current and relevant feedback which can also be seen as pathways of improving current practice to engage Māori learners in the classroom. In addition, building teachers' trust by establishing an open-door policy was determined as important in building relationships.

Research question three: What barriers exist for middle leaders in demonstrating support for teachers engaging Māori learners in their classroom?

There were clear descriptors of the barriers relating to the third question of this research study which were collected from all participants. The barriers are described as: restricted time due to a substantial amount of responsibilities; and school-wide systems and programmes.

Time

Throughout my research findings, there were explicit references to the challenges middle leaders faced with restricted time. The examples illustrated the limited time middle leaders have to carry out their responsibilities and the impact time has on building richer relationships with colleagues and whānau. Bassett (2016) has also researched the facets that relate to the extensive role middle leaders have in schools. The demands placed on middle leaders have inhibited them from fulfilling daily expectations. Bassett (2016) and Fitzgerald (2009) went even further to state that excessive administrative demands and restricted time contributed to barriers middle leaders faced daily. In my research findings, teachers also shared this common understanding. The unreasonably restricted time middle leaders had daily was consistently referred to by all the participants. These have been cited as significant barriers and a common area for development in leadership.

School-wide systems and programmes

My research showed examples of the range of school-wide systems middle leaders administer and oversee daily. The participants felt it was important for schools to establish systems and programmes that could relieve daily pressures middle leaders face. These were named as: pānui (notices); timetabling; classroom release planned and organised; and school-wide support for extra-curricular activities. By implementing particular timetabling systems, middle leaders could offer more support and time to work with teachers, which significantly promotes collegiality amongst staff. The relevance for school-wide systems was also described by teachers as the 'engine room'. Middle leaders rely on tikanga practices to remain authentic and sustainable, which proved to be highly important for the visions of both schools. The success of school-wide implemented programmes weighed heavily on middle leaders sharing their knowledge and skills. Programmes such as transitions, in-class learning support, pōwhiri, timetables and daily organisation were driven by middle leaders. These were shared by the teachers, and middle leaders expressed it was their responsibility to keep established systems up and running.

Research question four: How could middle leaders improve support for teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?

The final question of my research study brought to the surface a range of strategies that middle leaders are employing within their schools. Teachers expressed how they are supported to engage Māori learners in their classrooms.

Professional Learning and Development (PLD)

My findings have provided authentic examples of where middle leaders have delivered explicit PLD for teachers, specifically towards improving the outcomes for Māori learners in the classroom. There are notable factors that both middle leaders expressed through their personal learning to seek further skills in Te Ao Māori. In my study teachers also reported quite positively on the impact relevant and timely PLD had on students in their classrooms to be more engaged and improve achievement. There were examples of PLD shared by the teachers and their perspective on how it is relevant and purposeful. The examples ranged from classroom programmes to both middle leaders expressing their PLD in Te Ao Māori tikanga. The literature from Ministry of Education (2010) suggested PLD tikanga as, "He kai poutaka me kinikini atu, he kai poutaka me horehore atu, mā te tamaiti te iho. Look after the children to ensure the future strength of the people" (p.1).

Continue developing strong relationships with Māori students

The Ministry of Education (2012) stated that the New Zealand education system should provide learners with an environment where they thrive, engage, contribute and succeed. My research findings also shared the Ministry aims collectively from the teachers. The care and recognition

teachers had in establishing and maintaining culturally safe relationships were expressed and thoroughly presented. Furthermore, classroom treaties, topic learning, classroom environment and the culture established with the class were notable mentions and points of reference for teachers when describing how they were developing strong relationships with their students. These comments are in line with the literature from Bishop and Glynn (1999). Bishop et al., (2007) and Webber et al. (2016) that knowing our learner is an integral element in developing relationships to promote successful outcomes for Māori learners in classrooms.

Conclusions

The research highlighted a range of experiences and support between teachers and middle leaders in two primary schools and was aimed at examining what skills current middle leaders had to support and guide teachers of Māori students. My findings revealed similarities with recent literature. The literature showed that the role of middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools was extensive and focused on improving the teaching and learning for teachers and students. There was also literature that discussed culturally responsive leadership pedagogy where Māori learners are supported and engaged towards improving student achievement across New Zealand.

My findings showed that the middle leaders demonstrated an important role in the relationship between the community, whānau, students and teachers. Literature indicated that there are complexities around establishing and building supportive interpersonal relationships with others. The middle leaders in my study were also seen as working alongside teachers and whānau to support the success and engagement of Māori learners in classrooms. My research reiterated that the middle leader is the middle or 'meat' in the sandwich. Middle leaders are able to present explicit strategies and implement programmes specifically for the needs of learners and teachers in their schools, as well as acknowledge the strategic leadership plan and the direction stakeholders are moving in.

My findings indicated the importance PLD has on their position to improve the classroom practice of teachers, which subsequently impacted on student achievement. Middle leader involvement in PLD (recently Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and Community of Learning: Kāhui Ako groups) and in my research indicated that the scope was specific for improving the learning outcomes for Māori learners in their schools.

My findings showed that culturally responsive pedagogy was an important responsibility for middle leaders in two New Zealand primary schools. Schools nationwide also have students identified as 'priority learners', therefore my research set out to recognise this important element of education. There are currently numerous documents and strategies aimed at improving the outcomes for Māori learners. My research showed that improved student outcomes, and positive strategies to be culturally responsive in schools, were improving and becoming more evident across both primary schools. The middle leaders and teachers described the confidence

they had in being culturally responsive. It was acknowledged that if they lacked the skills there were numerous opportunities for educators to seek assistance. The middle leaders and teachers from both schools were improving cultural responsiveness through PLD opportunities that were available and being delivered.

The examples provided by participants were presented as one word – mana (strength and spirit). Middle leaders suggested that no matter how big or small the problem or challenge, everyone ensured the mana of all people would remain intact. The examples presented me with an understanding of the clear systems and tikanga that were evident daily through establishing professional and trusting relationships with colleagues and whānau. The culturally responsive approaches described by my participants, both teachers and middle leaders, supported the research from Bishop and Glynn (1999) as knowing your learner, knowing others and knowing how to approach challenges with the intention of improving student outcomes and learning. In addition, the fundamental guidelines were also presented to school leaders through an *ELM* pathway and *Tātaiako – the cultural competencies for teachers*.

Key recommendations

Through the conclusions drawn from my research there are a number of recommendations that could support middle leaders and teachers to improve the engagement and achievement for Māori learners in New Zealand primary schools.

Recommendations for middle leaders

In New Zealand primary schools Ministry of Education documents outline the professional role of and guidelines for middle leaders. Middle leaders have a responsibility to conduct themselves professionally and deliver with expertise the curriculum and pedagogy in today's education system. There is a need for professional development pathways that are available to educators moving into senior leadership positions as well as for qualifications to support further skills such as Te Ao Māori. It is important for middle leaders to be modelling how to improvise, integrate and differentiate learning and expectations for more positive outcomes and results. The schools which utilise the voices through Te Kotahitanga Project (TKP) as a lens into how to improve the engagement and outcomes of Māori learners are able to share understandings and knowledge. Therefore, there are supporting strategies to target the acceleration of success for Māori learners taken directly from the TKP. My recommendation is that middle leaders and teachers should be learning particular strategies to engage Māori learners in the classroom. Middle leaders and schools need to be providing teachers with support and programmes implemented school-wide which, in turn, can decrease the stigma placed on Māori learners being disengaged and unsuccessful in schools.

An additional recommendation is that further learning and opportunities are regularly provided for middle leaders. PLD needs to focus on who the learning is aimed at, and how the delivery of

PLD is explicit and purposeful for teachers. These considerations will impact on refining professional practice and the overall improvement in student outcomes. Middle leaders are recommended to implement PLD towards being more successful school-wide, rather than to focusing independently on those willing to be provided with further development and skills (Poskitt, 2015). It is recommended that schools look at how they are aligning the *Tātaiako – the cultural competencies for teachers* – through planning, observations and appraisals. Such a document could suggest culturally responsive examples and a framework where middle leaders are further able to support teachers to improve the learning outcomes of Māori students.

Recommendations for teachers

My research has presented findings that share a variety of experiences and challenges for teachers in New Zealand primary schools. Uncontrollable barriers include the complex learning needs and increasing class sizes. However, my recommendation is for teachers to have professional relationships with middle leaders and pathways for open communication. The saying, 'we only know what we know' should not be the standard, but rather, we are educators and learners who want and may need to further learn and improve our skills in particular areas. My research has shown that teachers have not entered into education under the stigma and labels that can present ignorance and complacency. The research showed those participants who went out to further their personal learning were more confident and knew personal learning was an extra element in their practice. This recommendation affirms that teachers should be asking, probing and seeking clarification when working towards engaging learners, those being Māori. A large body of literature supports the responsibility placed on teachers to know their learner, build relationships and create culturally responsive environments (Bevan-Brown, 2005; Bishop & Berryman, 2010; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). The powerful position teachers have in education alongside the support they have from middle leaders would justify Māori learners being empowered in New Zealand primary schools nationwide.

Another recommendation for teachers would be to join PLC and networking groups in clusters or zones so they are able to share their strategies, successful programmes and continue building relationships with a range of educators. Often teachers find themselves stuck in schools, however, if schools utilise PLD to network and support teachers there may be more shift and common understandings shared to improve areas needing development. Busher (2005) discussed that building collaborative relationships and including others can be empowering for educators. In using networking groups or PLCs, teachers are given time to reflect, share and recraft their practice as they learn from others. It is my recommendation that teachers are given those opportunities to share their narrative and build a community where they are supported and are collaborating to improve achievement and engagement for Māori learners in the classroom.

Limitations of my research

The small-scale study presented some limitations. The time allocated to complete pre-research forms, ethical approval and data collection became extremely tight. The time barrier fell into the heavier part of a school year, that being in term four when schools are predominantly looking at planning ahead and finalising the current years teaching and learning assessments.

I had restricted my small-scale study to schools with a minimum enrolment of 20% Māori and in the low decile range from different regions in Auckland. This purposive sampling limited the schools I was able to contact to invite and engage in my research. Next time, I think it would be better to widen my scope with the decile range and also consider schools outside of Auckland, to gain a comparative perspective from experienced middle leaders and teachers.

Overall conclusion

In conclusion, my small-scale research study has investigated the role middle leaders have in New Zealand primary schools. The findings indicate that participants, both middle leaders and teachers, have a firm understanding of the role and the impact they have on improving the learning outcomes for Māori students. The understanding middle leaders and teachers have of establishing culturally responsive environments and opportunities is relevant for successful learning to occur. These interpretations will provide the reader with some clarity for unpacking the role middle leaders have in New Zealand primary schools and the excessive responsibilities required of them daily. The participants' accounts support current literature surrounding the way middle leadership and cultural responsiveness in education requires cohesion and tikanga practices that have been described as successful and effective towards engaging Māori learners. It is my belief that we need middle leaders and teachers in New Zealand education who empower Māori learners by nurturing their identity, providing accessible and relevant learning opportunities, and professional relationships where collaboration and support can evolve. I believe there are many effective middle leaders and teachers in primary schools across our nation where a culturally responsive lens is leading their pedagogy and affirming the success for all learners in classrooms.

Tūngia te ururoa kia tupu whakaritorito te tutū o te harakeke. Set the overgrown bush alight, and a new flax shoot will spring up. In order to change we may need to leave some ways behind in order to do things differently (Anonymous, 2018).

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MĀORI GLOSSARY

Ako	to learn / to teach
Ako Māori	the 'culturally preferred' principle
Aroha	love
Aroha ki te tangata	a respect for people
Awhinatanga	guiding and supporting
E toku hoa aroha ki a koe	love to you my friend
Hapū	subtribe
He kanohi kitea	present yourself to people face to face
Hui	gathering/meeting
Iwi	tribe
Kā Hikitia	accelerating success
Kāhui Ako	community of learning
Karakia	prayer
Kaumatua	elderly
Kāupapa	the 'collective philosophy' principle
Kāupapa Māori	Māori philosophy
Kia māhaki	don't flaunt your knowledge
Kia pike ake i nga raruraru o te kainga	the 'socio-economic mediation' principle
Kia tūpato	be cautious
Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata	do not trample over the mana of the people
Kotahitanga	unity / solidarity
Kura	school / place of learning
Mahi	work
Mana	prestige / authority
Manaaki	take care of / give hospitality to
Manaakitanga	hospitality / kindness
Manaaki ki te tangata	share and host people, be generous
Māoritanga	Māori culture, Māori practices and beliefs
Matariki	pleiades
Ngāi Tahu	iwi located in the South Island
Pānui	to read
Pono	to be true
Pōwhiri	welcome
Pumanawatanga	a beating heart
Rangitiratanga	ownership
Rumaki	to immerse
Tangata Whenuatanga	indigenous people
Taha Māori	Māori identity
Tamariki	children
Taonga	treasure, anything prized

Taonga tuku iho	'cultural aspirations' principle
Tātaiako	Cultural competencies
Tautoko	to support
Te Ao Māori tikanga	Māori world
Te Reo	language
Te Reo or me nga tikanga	language and customs
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa	tertiary institution
tikanga	custom
Tino Rangatiratanga	the 'self-determination' principle
Titiro, whakarongo….korero	look, listen… speak
tuakana-teina	relationship between an older person and a younger person
Whakawhanaungatanga	building relationships
Whānaungatanga	relationships
Whānau	family
Waiata	song
Wānanga	to meet and discuss

ABBREVIATIONS

AUT	Auckland University of Technology
AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
CRT	Classroom Release Time
EFT	Effective Teaching Profile
ELM	Education Leadership Model
ERO	Education Review Office
MAC	Māori Achievement Collaborative
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PLD	Professional Learning Development
RAMS	Risk Assessment Measurement Systems
SENCo	Special Education Needs Co-ordinator
TKP	Te Kotahitanga Project
TSP	Teacher Survey Practices

APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Advertisement to participate in the research

Title of project: Middle leaders supporting teachers to engage Māori learners.

Project Supervisor: Eileen Piggot-Irvine

Researcher: Connie Igasan

ADVERTISMENT: TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Kia ora,

I am inviting experienced middle leaders and teachers to partake in my research study.

The purpose of my research is to gain critical insight into the supportive relationships middle leaders have with teachers and Māori learners in multicultural Auckland primary schools.

As an aspiring principal and being an experienced teacher of Māori ethnicity, this area is of personal interest to me.

If you are interested please do not hesitate to contact me.

Nga mihi,

Connie Igasan

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cXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix B: Leader Participant Information Sheet

22 September 2017

Kia ora, my name is Connie Igasan and I am a Masters of Educational Leadership student at AUT. I am currently an experienced classroom teacher with a passion around examining the support and responsibilities middle leaders provide teachers and Māori learners. This form is an invitation to participate in my research. My research forms a dissertation that is my final module in completing this degree. Participation in my research project will likely benefit you to examine how effective relationships middle leaders have with teachers. This understanding will also provide insight into supporting teachers to engage Māori learners more effectively.

The purpose of my research is to gain critical insight into the supportive relationships middle leaders have with teachers and Māori learners in schools. As an aspiring principal and being a teacher of Māori ethnicity, this area is of personal interest to me.

The reason I have contacted you is you are an experienced Middle Leader within your multicultural school. Your school represents a widely multicultural make up, which provides opportunity for students, enrolled likely being of Māori ethnicity. My research has a particular focus on engaging confident Māori learners. I contacted your school first and sent this invitation to you.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed and allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible. You will be required to complete a consent form prior to the research being completed. If you are interested, you can contact me at the details shown below.

As part of the research, I will need to interview for approximately one hour. During this interview, I will ask you a series of questions about your experience, and the role middle leaders are having on your practice following your reasons describing this. We can meet at a place you are comfortable, perhaps your work place or in a seminar room on one of AUT campuses.

Most of the questions you are asked will be very easy to answer, they are just inquiring about your experience as an experienced middle leader and the strategies you employ to support teachers engage Māori learners. You may choose to disclose as much or as littler personal information as you choose.

The questions provided will not be invasive and there is opportunity for you elaborate and give me more or less information for each question. You do not have to answer any questions throughout the interview that you do not wish to, and you may terminate the interview at any time you feel necessary.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling.

The benefit for you will be do have a better understanding on the impact relationships have on teachers and Māori learners that encourage learning and building confidence. The benefit for me is that you will be providing me with rich data to complete my dissertation. The school community and whānau will also benefit, as they will hear your experiences and stories relating to successful outcomes for Māori learners.

The data you have shared will only be shared with people who have signed the confidentiality agreement (supervisor, transcriber, editor and myself) and I will use coding and pseudonyms so you and your school will not be identified in the findings.

The cost will be an hour of your time in the interview and the time later to review the transcript of the interview. You will be asked to complete the review in one week of receiving the transcript.

You have one week to consider this invitation.

You will have an opportunity to view the dissertation and transcript once they are complete. A summary of the findings will also be made available to you.

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Elieen Piggot-Irvine. Email address: XXXXX

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEC Reference number *type the reference number*.

Appendix C: Teacher Participant Information Sheet

18 September 2017

Kia ora, my name is Connie Igasan and I am a Masters of Educational Leadership student at AUT. I am currently an experienced classroom teacher with a passion around examining the support and responsibilities middle leaders provide teachers and Māori learners. This form is an invitation to participate in my research. My research forms a dissertation that is my final module in completing this degree. Participation in my research project will likely benefit you to examine how effective relationships middle leaders have with teachers. This understanding will also provide insight into supporting teachers to engage Māori learners more effectively.

The purpose of my research is to gain critical insight into the supportive relationships middle leaders have with teachers and Māori learners in schools. As an aspiring principal and being a teacher of Māori ethnicity, this area is of personal interest to me.

The reason I have contacted you is you are an experienced teacher within your multicultural school. Your school represents a widely multicultural make up, which provides opportunity for students, enrolled likely being of Māori ethnicity. My research has a particular focus on engagement and success for Māori learners in mainstream education. I contacted your school first and sent this invitation to you.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed and allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible. You will be required to complete a consent form prior to the research being completed. If you are interested, you can contact me at the details shown below.

As part of the research, I will ask your middle leader to send you an electronic link via email. The anonymous survey will ask you a series of questions about your experience, your understanding of the role middle leaders demonstrate in your school. You will be asked to justify or comment on your reasons in the survey. The online survey will be completed through survey monkey and you will be asked to complete and submit electronically within seven days. If necessary, at your request we could also meet at a place you are comfortable, perhaps your work place or in a seminar room on one of AUT campuses to discuss the research study further.

Most of the questions you are asked will be very easy to answer, they are just inquiring about your experience as an experienced teacher and the support you receive from middle leaders to engage Māori learners in your classroom. You may choose to disclose as much or as littler personal information as you choose.

The questions provided will not be invasive and there is opportunity for you elaborate and give me more or less information for each question. You do not have to answer any questions throughout the survey that you do not wish to, and you may terminate the survey at any time you feel necessary.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on http://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/counselling.

The benefit for you will be do have a better understanding on the impact support may have on teachers' practice engaging Māori learners. The benefit for me is that you will be providing me with rich data to complete my dissertation. The school community and whānau will also benefit, as they will hear your experiences and stories relating to successful outcomes for Māori learners and strategies you apply when engaging learners.

The data you have shared will only be shared with people who have signed the confidentiality agreement (supervisor, transcriber, editor and myself) and I will use coding and pseudonyms so you and your school will not be identified in the findings. The survey will be conducted online therefore your anonymity will assured.

The cost will be 30 minutes of your time to log in and complete the survey online.
You have one week to consider this invitation.
You will have an opportunity to view the dissertation once it is complete. A summary of the findings will also be made available to you.

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Elieen Piggot-Irvine. Email address: XXXXX

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:
Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEC Reference number *type the reference number*.

Appendix D: Consent Form

Project title: *Middle Leaders supporting teachers to engage Māori learners?*

Project Supervisor: *Eileen Piggot-Irvine*

Researcher: *Connie Igasan*

○   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 22 September 2017

○   I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○   I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

○   I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

○   I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

○   I agree to take part in this research.

○   I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes○   No○

Participant's signature: ....…………………………………………………………

Participant's name: ....……………………………………………………

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on type the date on which the final approval was granted AUTEC Reference number type the AUTEC reference number

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

APPENDIX F: Semi-Structured Interview (Experienced Middle Leader)

Title of project:	Middle leaders supporting teachers to engage Māori learners.
Project Supervisor:	Eileen Piggot-Irvine
Researcher:	Connie Igasan

Thank you for taking the time to attend this interview. The purpose of this group is to gain your perspective on your role as middle leader and your understanding into the support teachers require to engage Māori learners. You have signed the consent forms providing your opinions to be used within this research study. After the semi-structured interview has been transcribed, you will receive a copy to check that what has been recorded is accurate, your anonymity has been protected, and that your contribution is authentic.

Can you explain your role as middle leader?

How do you currently demonstrate support for teachers?

How would you describe your relationship with teachers?

How would you describe your relationship with Māori students and whānau?

Can you describe culturally responsive pedagogy that is in place at this school which help teachers to engage Māori learners?

How do these practices help to strengthen the teachers' understandings of engaging Māori learners in their classroom?

What barriers or challenges do you face in demonstrating your middle leader role effectively?

What impact has improving Māori engagement had on student achievement?

As this is a semi-structured interview supplementary questions can/will be asked when more explanation or elaboration is needed.

Questions such as …
   a. What do you mean by …
   b. Could you say more about …
   c. What did you do then?

APPENDIX G: Online survey (Experienced Teachers)

Survey

Appendix G

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain a range of perspectives regarding culturally responsive leadership and how this pedagogy promotes engagement and success for Māori learners in primary schools.

Please complete the online survey.
Please note a comment can be provided for all questions.

1. I have been successful in promoting success for Māori students this year.

A	Strongly agree	B	Agree	C	Not sure
D	Disagree	E	Strongly Disagree		

2. Comment

3. Current leadership practices at this school are supporting me to engage with Māori learners.

A	Strongly Agree	B	Agree	C	Not sure
D	Disagree	E	Strongly Disagree		

4. Comment

5. I feel confident to engage Māori learners and provide opportunities for success.

A	Strongly Agree	B	Agree	C	Not sure
D	Disagree	E	Strongly Disagree		

6. Comment

Permission for researchers to access school staff.

Project title: *Middle Leaders supporting teachers to engage Māori learners?*

Project Supervisor: **Eileen Piggot-Irvine**

Researcher: **Connie Igasan**

○   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 10 October 2017.

○   I give permission for the researcher to undertake research within
_____

○   I give permission for the researcher to access the staff of
_____

Principal's signature: ....

Principal's name:
....

Principal's Contact Details (if appropriate):

…………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………..

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date on which the final approval was granted* ***AUTEC Reference number*** *type the AUTEC reference number*

Note: The head of the organisation should retain a copy of this form.

2 July 2015

Transcript Data Analysis

Administrative

Relievers and Day to day basis organisation

RAMs, CRT, marking, assessments

School wide responsibilities

SENCO and appraising teachers, Transition programmes, use of Te Reo used in weekly school assemblies selected and organised "we always have a Māori waiata for each assembly and I think those are noticed"

SENCO, Teaching and team leader component in Māori immersion, school-wide events and checking RAMS

Teaching English transition for those learners in CRT time "Quality control in kawa, tikanga, whakaritenga how things are done and supporting teachers too is really important."

Relationships

Learning with others as well as lead others

New whanau or students, welcoming them and supporting into new classrooms.

Connect with whanau "if there are issues they need to discuss it is with me if I am the right person for that, I am like the two worlds book between the parents and the school, in the middle of those worlds.

"I have been here for so long and have a strong relationship with teaching role and managing role"

Trust

"You know our people are good people and you can be yourself in the roles we have"

> 1. The key roles and skills of middle leaders in order to support teachers engaging Māori.

Curriculum pedagogy

Been at school here for nine years starting as a teacher moved to TL and acting AP before appointment of DP

Planning, teaching and assessment standards in team

CRT release puts me in the classroom across the school

Professionalism

I am by all no means an expert, pointers and guidance on how to pronounce this or if I have the right tohutohu is supported by others.

Pivotal role between whanau and senior leadership team and take the Maori kaupapa into those meetings.

Communication

Putting a weekly pānui of the up comings each week to whanau and staff, the inclusion of some Te Reo that has been learnt through the wānanga that week.

Whānau engagement

Transition programme for NE or new whānau. "We value and prioritise that we are 'walking the talk' so our community know we are welcoming."

Transcript Data Analysis

Successful programmes

Running staff meetings and we have unpacked and discussed readings that discuss culturally responsive pedagogy.

Community survey

Transitions for NE and new whanau welcoming

Creating own resource that teaches ToW ad biculturalism in NZ – where two worlds meet.

Oral language strategies are meeting the needs of learners as all children are second language learners

Relationships

Learning from those experts in our school but also staff feel comfortable coming to me for support
Open door policy
Value teachers getting to know whanau and students at the beginning of school year
Knowing teachers – when high stress levels are evident and how to support them best "we can be quite hard on ourselves"
"I have a strong relationship with teachers, a respectful relationship...
I don't know everything and I am first to say that so others may have strengths I don't, it is important I know this"

Whanau

In charge the transition programme with NE and new whanau builds the relationship where I know everyone and they feel welcome
Learning whakapapa valued and prioritise
Parents are wanting to see oral language being developed more with children

---

2. How the established skills and roles that are in place to support teachers.

Professionalism

Being a within school leader of COL (Community of Learning)

Snapshot taken of what is happening around the school and classrooms to identify strengths and where our next steps are as a whole staff.

Sharing and analysing an intensive survey from the community to revalue the school.

What sort of PD is most useful for them and what PD is out there for supporting pedagodgy.

Supporting mainstream and the Maori learners there that they also lead Māori kāuapapa

Modelling / Leading

Leading learning: "I am doing a Maori language course through the wananga to learn the language and I have been incorporating this new learning into different aspects around the school"

School assemblies to incorporate Te Reo

Listening to teachers and to see what skills they have and what knowledge they have. We need to see how we can best support because a big challenge in our kura is oral language.

Going to do wānanga reo so to strengthen my reo, also other teachers have set these goals to further their skills.

"The processes are working and if they don't I always ensure you maintain your mana, everyone gets support to say what they need to say"

Survey themes

Professional Learning Development	Administrative Role Middle leader in their school has	Culturally responsive Pedagogy	Maori student achievement Whanau	Barriers
1. ML PLD 2. ML school-wide PLD 3. CoL	1. Daily responsibilities 2. School wide expectations 3. Title DP/AP	1. Tikanga 2. Knowing our learners 3. Creating relevant learning	1. Barriers / challenges 2. Successful initiatives 3. Relationships 4. Communication 5. Middle leader role	1. Communication 2. Relationships 3. Modelling 4. Professionalism 5. Challenges in pedagogy and practice. 6. Time, class sizes

Topics in survey data not colour coded

- School wide events and buildings

Research Questions:

1. What are the key skills and roles middle leaders need to employ to support teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?
2. How well have middle leaders established those skills and roles with teachers?
3. What barriers exist for middle leaders in demonstrating support for teachers engaging Māori learners in their classroom?
4. How could middle leaders improve support for teachers engaging Māori learners in primary schools?